

Young India

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Contents

Notes—

1. An Excellent Choice; 2. Satisfactory for both parties; 3. Only 'six months simple' for the President; 4. Malabar Reconstruction; 5. Ideal father and Son; 6. Essence of Civil Disobedience; 7. I have lost all credit; 8. More written newspapers; 9. Ban on Khadder Cloth; 10. Sindh Prisoners; 11. Dr. Kichlew No. 776; 12. A Correction; 13. Rather free than Sober; 14. Foreign Cloth; 15. From far off Sileher.

By M. K. G. 109-114

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad " " 118

Articles &c.—

Shaking the Manes . . . By M. K. GANDHI 119
Mill-Cloth . . . " " 119
No End to my Sorrows . . . " " 123
Our Law . . . " " 123
A Great Statement 115
In Cold Blood 120

Correspondence—

Dr. Kichlew & Col. Wedgwood . . . 124
Prisoners in Delhi gaol 125
Government Denials 126

Notes

An Excellent Choice

In selecting Sardar Kharak Singh as the successor to Aga Mahomed Safdar as President of the Provincial Congress Committee, the Congress Committee has made an excellent choice. It could not have done better. In honouring Sardar Sahab the Committee has honoured itself. The election of Sardar Kharak Singh is also a delicate compliment paid to the Sikhs for their bravery, sacrifice and patriotism. Nowadays the office of President of a Congress Committee, a Khilafat Committee or a Gurdwara Committee is no sinecure. Prosecution for some offence or another under the ordinary or extraordinary laws imposed by the Government upon the people of India almost follows as a matter of course in many provinces. With the exception of a few provinces, some office bearers of the various Committees have contributed their quota to His Majesty's hotels. I congratulate Sardar Kharak Singh, therefore, upon his courage in taking up the reins of office at this stormy period of the nation's career.

Satisfactory for both Parties

The imprisonment of leaders seems to satisfy both the Government and the public. It is obvious that they satisfy

the Government, otherwise they would not have performed the thankless task of imprisoning leaders. They believe that thereby they will be able to suppress the non-co-operation movement. It is equally obvious that the people are satisfied with these imprisonments because the movement, wherever they take place, is making headway. The latest instance comes from Nellore. Although this place was doing steady work it was not pulsating with vitality as it must be doing now. An esteemed worker writes:—

"You would have read in the papers how, as in other places, here too the authorities have been co-operating with the people to push up our movement. Recently, they have rendered us a distinct service by awarding a year's rigorous imprisonment to the President, Secretary and three other members of the District Congress Committee for their having issued a notice exhorting village officers to resign and convening a meeting to ascertain how far the several Taluks of the district are prepared to take part in the non-tax campaign. The President of the Committee is a non-co-operating lawyer and the Secretary is Mr. Ram Reddi, your host when you last came to Nellore. Mr. Reddi entered public life only two years back, but is already considered the most valuable worker in the district. He belongs to the most influential family of the Reddi community and his prosecution has carried our gospel to far-off nooks and corners which would have otherwise been impenetrable for ideas of this kind. Nellore is one of the backward districts of the province, but the Government has been trying its best to quicken the rate of its progress."

Mr. Venkatappaya wrote to me only the other day fearing that the Government would not go on with Mr. Reddy's prosecution because he was a most influential leader in his district. He was afraid because the dropping of the prosecution might have damped the rising enthusiasm of the people. The Government have, however, dispelled Mr. Venkatappaya's fears, and Mr. Reddy's imprisonment seems to have galvanised Nellore into activity it has never seen before.

Only '6 Months' Simple' for the President

If Begum Abul Kalam Azad and the Maulana himself complain about the inadequacy of the sentence pronounced upon the Maulana Sahab, what must be the feeling of the President of the Congress and his devoted partner on having heard that he together with Mr. Sasmal was to have only 6 months' simple imprisonment? Why on earth the trial should have been dragged and judgment postponed if such an untheatrical sentence was to be pronounced, only the Government can tell. The gossip that was sent to me along the rails was that the Government were seeking a suitable opportunity for dischar-

ging both the Maulana and the Deshabandhu. The latest gossip which is supposed to be authentic, I dare not disclose. Nor is it of importance for the reader to know. We must take, not even excluding the President, our lot as it comes to us. I am receiving biting letters from correspondents accusing me of simplicity, of hard-heartedness, of faint-heartedness and all such kindred weaknesses. Some correspondents tell me that I have sold the cause of the prisoners. Others tell me I have thrown all my non-co operation views to the winds, and I have been faithless to the President of the Congress. Fortunately, many years of service have given me a fairly tough hide and these shafts do not pierce it, but I do assure all these impatient critics that not a particle of the principle of non-co-operation has been surrendered by the resolutions. On the contrary, refusal to suspend mass civil disobedience in the face of grave warnings from Nature would have meant a complete surrender of the fundamental principle of non-co-operation. The discharge of prisoners I purposely brought to the surface when it became a point of national honour, because with the change of issue from the immediate attainment of the triple goal to the immediate attainment of the three-fold freedom, the demand for the discharge of prisoners became a natural consequence. But Chauri Chaura has raised another immediate issue, viz., terrible penance and a fierce process of purification, and this penitential purification requires the sacrifice of the imprisoned workers and the temporary sacrifice of many of our activities which have revived the nation. But such things happen in all wars, much more frequently in spiritual warfare such as ours is claimed to be. I call it spiritual in the sense that we have resolutely declined to make use of physical force for the attainment of our end. We were in danger of being drifted away from our moorings, and it was necessary for us to return, but the return is merely meant to give us greater purity, greater perception and therefore greater strength, and if non-co-operators have to become seasoned soldiers for the nation's battle, they will doubtless understand the value of waiting and preparing. He who waits for preparation or otherwise, advances the cause as much as the warrior who stands three feet deep in the trenches. All our sufferings will have been lost upon us if we do not realise these elements of the science of war, whether it is spiritual or physical.

Malabar Reconstruction

Mr. Madhava Rao and others of the Servants of India Society and the Secretaries of the Young Men's Christian Association have jointly issued a series of questions regarding reconstruction in Malabar. The questions have been elaborately framed and cover all the departments—economic, industrial, educational, civic and general. I propose to deal with only one. In my opinion it solves all the other questions. It will be found a most difficult task to organise loans or the other things in connection with the re-settlement of the afflicted people of Malabar. If, however, the people in want are supplied with spinning wheels, most of the questions will be automatically solved. The thing can be done with the least capital possible, and it would be a permanent addition to the industries of Malabar. Wood, which is so much required for the spinning wheels, is a matter of no consequence in Malabar, and many by-industries will receive strength and encouragement without any extra effort. I would, therefore, heartily commend to the organisers of the reconstruction scheme this one single proposition as the central truth round which all the other

propositions should be made to revolve. They will then find that any scheme so constructed will lead to economy, efficiency and the least waste.

Ideal Father and Son.

Some weeks ago, I dealt with the imprisonment of three Malaviyas and in doing so showed with what humility and with what respect for his revered father, Govind Malaviya, when he simply could not resist the voice of conscience, courted imprisonment in spite of Panditji's wish to the contrary. The public will be pleased to have the following translation of the letter Panditji wrote to Govind Malaviya who has sent a copy to me. The original is of course in Hindi:—

"With blessings to Govind. May you live long.

"I have received your letter. I am sorry I could not acknowledge it earlier because of my distractions. I am not displeased with you. Please be quite at ease on this score. I certainly did not approve of the picketing of the Modern High School. A school is not like an abode of sin or a case distributing poison such that it would be justifiable to picket it so as to prevent children from going there, but both you and Krishna were quite right in going to the public meeting and giving to the audience the message of the Congress. The policy adopted by the Government is altogether improper. I am hoping that it will be reversed. Do keep yourself perfectly happy. Mr. Gandhi sent me the letter you addressed to him about your imprisonment.

The foregoing is dated the 13th January.

The following was sent by Panditji to Krishna Kant Malaviya bearing the same date:—

"I am sorry I have been so busy that I could not write to you or to Govind these many days. I am writing now at 11 P. M.

"You were perfectly right in addressing the meeting. Do not allow your mind to be oppressed with any idea that I disapproved your having done so. I said at the All-India Congress Committee (or rather at the Subjects Committee) meeting at Ahmedabad that if the Government would not withdraw the notification declaring Congress volunteers "unlawful associations", such volunteers would be justified in disregarding the notification and in going to jail for it.

"The Conference which I have convened along with others will take place to-morrow. The enclosed letter will show you the object of the Conference. Mr. Gandhi is here and so are Sir Sankaran Nair, Sir Visveswarajya and many others. We have had many hours of preliminary discussion to day. I expect some good will come out of it.

"Keep yourself perfectly cheerful. Do not let any of your fellow-sufferers be under the impression that I had any hand in the alteration of your sentences from rigorous to simple imprisonment for six months. I did not complain to any one about your sentences, though I did feel pained at the brutality of the sentences.

"I intended to see you both in the jail on my return to Allahabad. But now that you have been removed to Agra, I may not be able to see you for some time. However, that is of little consequence. There is very heavy work before me during the next few months which will gratify your hearts. More hereafter."

In sending me a copy of the letter Govind remarks that the circular letter convening the Conference was not delivered to Krishna Kant. He also asked me not to publish the two letters without Panditji's permission. As both the letters I considered to be of public interest,

I felt that they should be printed, and having obtained the necessary permission I have shared them with the public. To me both are precious letters. They are an illustration of what a family life should be. There is mutual toleration between the different members of the same family and perfect independence retained by and given to the younger ones. What is more, the letters reveal the nobility of Panditji's character. If he is not in jail to-day it is not because he is afraid of it but because he has not yet seen his way clear to it. Who that is in intimate touch with him does not know that he is borne down with anxiety and torn asunder by an eternal conflict of duty? I have often felt that if he was carried away to prison it would be a positive deliverance for him from constant anxiety and worries attendant upon a public life such as his.

I have reproduced the letters in order to plead for general toleration on the part of non-co-operators. I want the readers to share with me the belief that though Panditji has a record of public service unequalled by any living Indian, there are men among the Independents and the Moderates who find themselves estranged against us, not because they are weak but from a stern sense of duty. If we would only cultivate the necessary spirit of humility, charity and toleration towards our opponents and will not impute unworthy motives, I know that we would win many over to our side who are to-day ranged against us because of our intoleration. When a majority becomes intolerant it is feared, distrusted and in the end detested, and very properly so. If non-co-operators have, as I believe they have, the vast masses with them, surely it behoves them to be tolerant, kind and respectful towards the minority even whilst they retain their own view-point as stubbornly as ever. Intoleration is weakness and justifies the charge often brought against us that the movement, although it is not intended to, does engender hatred. I hope the two letters I have reproduced will put non-co-operators on their guard.

The Gorakhpur tragedy was nothing but a forcible illustration of intoleration. We often forget that one of our duties consists in converting even the police and the soldiery to our views. We will never do so by terrorism. The mob inhumanity to the police has added to the corruption that is rampant amongst them and has now called forth the reprisals which shock us. Let us bear in mind the fact that a corrupt Government and a corrupt Police presuppose the existence of corruption among the people who submit to Government and Police corruption. After all, there is considerable truth in the statement that a people deserve the Government that they have. It does not need a religious belief in the doctrine of non-violence to make us see that we have to win the Police and the Military, largely consisting of our own countrymen, over to our side by kindness, toleration and even submission to their brutality. Surely, in a majority of cases they know not what they are doing.

Essence of Civil Disobedience

A friend, a Congress official, writes from Simla:—

"In the present mood of my countrymen I find certain members belonging to different Congress organisations, in order to comply with your behests regarding the practising of civil disobedience, have found out certain novel methods of disobeying law by staging certain plays which have been proscribed by the Government, for instance *Zakimi-i-Punjab* which was staged sometime ago in Multan and very recently

in Simla, resulting in arrests in both the cases. Now may I ask your opinion about this form of disobedience which was practised before the date fixed as laid down in the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee, viz., 15th January 1922? Further, were the actors in these plays justified in informing the Government in a spirit of defiance beforehand that they were going to stage a proscribed play and by such action inviting arrests?

"Furthermore, I will draw your attention to the stormy literature which is issuing forth from Delhi and other places in the shape of cheap poetical booklets and is being recited by small boys and by certain irresponsible volunteers (for I must call them irresponsible) containing matter which is obviously inconsistent with the principle of non-violent non-co-operation inasmuch as it contains words and phrases which are calculated to spread hatred and create contempt against every individual Englishman in this country and may result in violence. I bring this fact to your notice because methinks that the authors pose to be non-co-operators and to be with you in this struggle for the salvation of our dear motherland. May I ask if this kind of propaganda instead of proving helpful will not bring about mischievous results?"

The staging of the play was certainly not justified if it was done before the 15th January. It was also not justified if it was done without the consent of the Provincial Congress Committee. Every form of civil disobedience was subject to the previous sanction of the local Congress Committee. The staging of the play was also unjustified if the play itself was calculated needlessly to excite passions and to induce hatred. Assuming that all the conditions I have named were fulfilled, the managers were quite right in giving previous information to the Government in a dignified manner, because the essence of civil disobedience is that it is public and made specially known to those interested in arresting.

As to the "stormy literature", it is a sad thing that pamphlets such as the writer alludes to are being published and so largely patronised. The writer has mentioned two such booklets. I am, however, not printing the names. Some other correspondent sends me one of the booklets also for my edification and advice. The title as well as the contents are objectionable and breathe nothing but hatred. It is our duty to bring every wrong to public notice, but there are ways and ways of doing the thing. No point is gained by putting things offensively. The offence contains in the fact itself. To embellish such facts is to detract from the merit, and at the present moment when people are under the pledge of non-violence, publication of such literature is highly reprehensible. It spreads anger and makes the task of offering civil disobedience more and more difficult.

I have lost all Credit

A friend from Lahore without giving his name sends me the following thundering note:—

"On Tuesday the 14th I read the *Tribune* and the resolutions therein, passed at the emergency meeting of the All-India Congress Working Committee. On Monday when I came from my office I heard a flying rumour that Mahatmaji had postponed the date of the mass civil disobedience, but at that time I thought the news devoid of foundation. After a short time a friend of mine hawked me at my house and we went to bazar. His face was somewhat sadder than usual. I enquired of him the reason of his sadness. He said he was utterly disgusted and so gave up the idea of following this movement, Mahatmaji was going to give up the lead

of this movement and at the same time he had advised all the Provincial Congress Committees not to enrol any more volunteers. No picketing propaganda should be undertaken as long as the special session of the All-India Congress Committee had not confirmed what to do further.

"The people are of this opinion that you have turned your face and become sickle-minded. They will co-operate with the Government without any hesitation and join the ceremony of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Some say that they will not observe *hartal* and will accord a hearty reception at Lahore.

"Some merchants are under the impression that you have removed all the restrictions from all liquor shops and *videchi* cloth.

"Truly speaking, each and every one in Lahore city is holding meeting in the bazaar as well as in the house, and you will forgive me if I will say boldly that they are condemning the action of the All-India Congress Committee.

"I now for my sake ask you these questions.

"(1) Will you now give up the lead of this movement? If so, why?

"(2) Will you be good enough to let me know why you have given such instructions to all Provincial Congress Committees? Have you given an opportunity to Pandit Malaviya for a Round Table Conference for a settlement, or has Pandit Malaviya agreed to embrace your movement in case the Government has not turned true to its words?

"(3) Grant a compromise is arranged and the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs are redressed and in the case of Swaraj the Government may only extend the reforms, will you be satisfied with that or continue your activities till you have got the full dominion status?

"(4) Suppose no decision is arrived at. Will Pandit Malaviya and all others who are connected with this conference come to your side or will their fate remain in the balance just as now?

"(5) In case no decision is arrived at, will you give up the idea of civil disobedience, if there is danger of violence.

"(6) Is your intention now to disband the present volunteer corps and enlist those who know spinning and wear handspun and handwoven *khaddar*?

"(7) Suppose violence has made appearance when you have started your mass civil disobedience, what will you do at that time? Will you stop your activities at the very moment?"

There is much more criticism in this letter than I have reproduced. The writer tells me that the people are so disgusted that they now threaten to become co-operators and are of opinion that I have sold Lala Lajpat Rai, Desha-bandhu Chittu Ranjan Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Ali Brothers and others, and tells me that if I give up the leadership there are thousands who will leave this world by committing suicide. I may assure the citizens of Lahore in particular and the Punjabis in general that I do not believe what is said of them. I used to receive such letters even during the Martial Law days because of the suspension of civil disobedience, but I discounted all the news and on my reaching the Punjab in October, I found that I was right in my analysis of the Punjab mind and I discovered that there was no one to challenge the propriety of my act. I feel still more confident of the correctness of the decision of the Working Committee, but if it is found that the country repudiates my action I shall not mind it. I can but do my duty. A leader is useless when he acts against the promptings of his own conscience, surrounded as he must be by people

holding all kinds of views. He will drift like an anchorless ship if he has not the inner voice to hold him firm and guide him. Above all, I can easily put up with the denial of the world, but any denial by me of my God is unthinkable, and if I did not give at this critical period of the struggle the advice that I have, I would be denying both God and Truth. The telegrams and letters I am receiving from all parts of the country thanking me for my decision—telegrams from both non-co-operators and co-operators—confirm my belief that the country appreciates the decision and that the Lahore writer has given undue prominence to some heated bazaar talk which was bound to take place after the Bardoli decision which all of a sudden disturbed all previous calculations. I can understand the effect of the first shock, but I am also sure that when the people begin to analyse the implications of non-violence, they will come to no other conclusion than that of the Working Committee.

And now for the questions of the correspondent:

(1) I am not likely to give up the lead of the movement unless I have a clear indication that the people want me to. One method of giving that indication is an adverse vote of the Working Committee or the All-India Congress Committee.

(2) I assure the public that Pandit Malaviyaji had absolutely no hand in shaping my decision. I have often yielded to Panditji, and it is always a pleasure for me to yield to him whenever I can and always painful to differ from one who has an unrivalled record of public service and who is sacrifice personified. But so far as the decision of suspension is concerned, I arrived at it on my reading the detailed report of the Chauri Chaura tragedy in the *Chronicle*. It was in Bardoli that telegrams were sent convening the Working Committee meeting and it was in Bardoli that I sent a letter to the members of the Working Committee advising them of my desire to suspend civil disobedience. I went thereafter to Bombay at the instance of Panditji, who together with the other friends of the Malaviya Conference, undoubtedly wished to plead with me for a suspension and who were agreeably surprised when I told them that so far as I was concerned my mind was made up, but that I had kept it open so that I could discuss the point thoroughly with the members of the Working Committee. The suspension has no reference to a round table conference or to any settlement. In my opinion, a round table conference is bound to prove fruitless. It requires a much stronger Viceroy than Lord Reading has proved to be to perceive the situation in the country and then to describe it correctly. I certainly feel that Pandit Malaviyaji has already come into the movement. It is not possible for him to keep away from the Congress or from danger, but the Bardoli decision was arrived at purely on its merits and I could not have been shaken from the original purpose had I not been unnerved by the Chauri Chaura tragedy which was the last straw.

(3) Nothing short of a full Dominion status is likely to satisfy me personally and nothing short of complete severance will satisfy me if the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs remain unredressed, but the exact form does not depend upon me. I have no clear-cut scheme. It has to be evolved by the people's representatives.

(4) At the present moment there is no question of a settlement. Therefore, the question as to what Panditji and all others will do is premature if not irrelevant. But assuming that Panditji holds any conference and that its resolutions are ignored by the Government, Panditji and others will act as all self-respecting men do in such circumstances.

(5) I can never give up the *idea* of civil disobedience, no matter what danger there is of violence, but I shall certainly give up the idea of *starting* mass civil disobedience so long as there is a certain danger of violence. Individual civil disobedience stands on a different footing.

(6) There is no question of disbanding any Volunteer Corps, but the names of those who do not conform to the Congress pledge have certainly to be removed from the list if we are to be honest.

(7) If we have understood the essential parts of non-violence, we can but come to one conclusion that any eruption of widespread violence—and I call the Chauri Chaura tragedy widespread for the purpose—automatically stops mass civil disobedience. That many other parts of the country have nobly responded to the spirit of non-violence is good, but it is not good enough to continue mass civil disobedience even as a most *peaceful* meeting is disturbed if one man obstructs or commits violence. Mass civil disobedience for becoming successful requires a non-violent environment. The reason for restricting it to one single small area is to prevent violence elsewhere. It, therefore, means that mass civil disobedience in a particular area is possible when the other areas passively co-operate by remaining non-violent.

More Written Newspapers

The Sikh friends have come out with the *Azad Akali* both in Gurmukhi and in Urdu. Their effort is more readable and more artistic even than the Gauhati paper which I praised only the other day. Every sheet is so clear. Then there is the *Assam Congress Bulletin*, a weekly just started at Tejpur. This is purely in English. The print is not so clear as in the *Azad Akali*. I do not get the time to go through all these newspapers, but I hope that the editors of these written newspapers take special care in the selection of news, that they do not put in a single fact which cannot be fully substantiated and that they do not indulge in criticism that is calculated to excite hatred, seeing that such newspapers cannot be controlled by any Government in the world, so long as there are people ready and brave enough to write them. They must be specially restrained in the choice of language. It would be terrible if written newspapers were to indulge in undisciplined language. So long as the country is under the spell of non-violence, every word uttered or written in anger or malice retards our progress.

Ban on Khaddar Caps

It was a pleasure to me to receive the following from Moulvi Zafar-ul-Mulk Alavi of Lucknow who is at present undergoing imprisonment in the Fatehgarh Jail. The reader may not even remember that he was among the earliest victims. His arrest had created a sensation as it was unexpected. A man of literary tastes, he was living in practical retirement. He was fearless and truthful in his writings. Hence his arrest. From his letter the reader will see with what scrupulous care he is discharging himself in the gaol. Like so many other N. C. O. prisoners, he is helping the authorities in preserving gaol discipline. Let the letter speak for itself:—

"I have purposely refrained from writing to you during the last 15 months that I spent here, as I was thoroughly satisfied with my lot and did not see any reason to snatch from you even a single minute for mere personal satisfaction.

"There have, however, arisen some points in connection with the jail life of non-cooperators which I should like to bring to your kind notice.

"Sometime ago, a volunteer sentenced under several sections of the I. P. C. that are not considered to be of a

political nature, came here from Etawah and it was found that he refused to wear the jail clothing which is not made of handspun yarn, as he thought it would be going against the volunteer pledge that required him to use only "handspun and handwoven *khaddar*" to the exclusion of every other cloth. This young man was so stubborn that he would not even take any food. Fortunately the jail officials did not precipitate matters and allowed me to rescue him from the awkward position in which he had, through unbounded zeal, placed himself.

"Now this is not the only instance of its kind. A week ago I had read that some one at Allahabad had also fallen in the same mistake. To my mind, this attitude is quite untenable and contrary to the spirit in which we are expected to live in jails.

"The other point is rather serious. Two non-cooperators who were lately made simple prisoners and are therefore allowed to put on their own clothes, have been prohibited from wearing the Gandhi cap. This order made them very uneasy, as the officer who gave the order had all along been very kind and they did not want to do anything to offend him. But as they did not want to be humiliated in this manner, they asked me to intervene on their behalf.

"I spoke to the officer concerned and was assured that personally he was not particular about it. In fact he had merely carried out the wishes of the District Magistrate who as official visitor happened to come here and seeing some of the simple prisoners wearing these caps ordered to prohibit their use.

"According to the jail regulations, all simple prisoners wear their own clothing and so far as I understand, their choice in the matter of dress is only restricted in the sense that they cannot wear anything which might offer facilities for suicide or escape. Beyond that, they are perfectly free to dress themselves in any fashion they like. Thus it is clear that this prohibition is only an innovation of very recent date and is simply obnoxious and humiliating. For though many of us do not usually wear this cap, yet there can be no doubt that a very large number of our countrymen, more specially the non-cooperators, consider it to be an outward symbol of our unity and the most expressive token of our reverence and high regard for the great leader whose venerable name it bears.

"The Inspector General of U. P. Jails is about to visit this jail very shortly and the matter will be referred to him who is likely to settle it satisfactorily, if his discretion has not already been tied by an order of the local Government. In that case, of course, it will be our duty to disobey the order at all costs."

The difficulty, however, about *khaddar* caps is one of principle on which there can be no surrender. The simple imprisonment prisoners have the right to wear their own dress. It is therefore an insult to them to deprive them of their caps. I hope that the Inspector General has solved this difficulty as expected by the Moulvi Sahab.

It is no pleasure to have to fight the Government in the jails. They might be treated as neutral ground where the animosities may be buried. Death closes many a controversy. Imprisonment is civil death. Is it not possible to keep the political animosities outside the prison walls? But I know it is too much to expect this Government, which lives on pretensions of decency, to observe the laws of the game even behind the iron bars. Liberty will be all the dearer for the price that is being exacted of us.

As I write these bitter lines, the voice within me asks whether I am doing justice to the Government! Do I not know that the prisoners are having a royal time of it in the Agra Jail? But the answer swiftly comes—all jails are not Agra Jails. Whatever is given is extorted. Whatever can possibly be denied is withheld. I hear Pandit Motilalji saying to me: 'What is my comfort worth if my next door neighbour, who does not happen to be a well-known barrister, does not get the creature comforts that I get!'

Sindh Prisoners

Mr. Virumal Begraj who is a great social reformer and the soul of Sukkur writes while being taken from Sindh to an unknown destination:—

"On false evidence I have been convicted to one year's simple and one year's rigorous imprisonment, both the sentences to run consecutively; Mr. Bhojraj M. Ajwani and Mr. Wadhmal, Secretaries, to six months' rigorous imprisonment each. We offered no defence and engaged no pleader. We are quite cheerful and happy. Our young friends are keeping up all national activities."

It is the greatest revelation that workers are being replaced as fast as they are arrested. It is the surest sign of the vitality of the movement.

Dr. Kichlew—No. 776

Dr. Kichlew's letter reproduced elsewhere will be read with mingled satisfaction. We can envy his gain in weight, his buoyancy, but we cannot congratulate the Bombay Government on the treatment of political prisoners.

Dr. Kichlew rightly calls attention to the fact that when in the Punjab he was charged with a more serious offence, he had decent treatment, whereas now when the charge is in reality nothing, he and his fellow prisoners are treated as common felons. But the interest of the correspondence will centre in Col. Wedgwood's frank letter which Dr. Kichlew has sent for publication. 'Gandhi-ism' referred to by Col. Wedgwood is nothing but a return to truth and simplicity. Truth must always be simple. And nothing that is simple and truthful admits of violence. 'Gandhi-ism' is a revival of the old maxims which are common both to the East and the West. 'Live and let live' is what non-co-operation stands for. The modern motto is hideous exclusiveness based upon violence. Equality and Fraternity are mere lip-phrases and mutual intercourse is not based on mutual love but on mutual repulsion and consequent preparedness to do violence. It is, however, too early yet to talk of 'Gandhi-ism'. India has to stand the test and vindicate the supremacy of non-violence over violence before the ideal can be approximated.

A Correction

In *Young India* of 2nd February I reproduced a letter from Pandit Arjunlal Sethi's son regarding Pandit Sethi's treatment in the gaol. I have now learnt that the son was misinformed and that no branly or eggs were administered to Arjunlalji. He is reported also to be properly fed and clothed. Whilst correspondents have generally sent most accurate accounts, too much care can never be exercised in transmitting news. Correspondents should always err on the side of under-statement. Exaggeration not only discredits us but it produces a contrary effect on the opponent, whereas accuracy of statement brings home the guilt to the person accused, whether he confesses it or not. I have invariably found that a truthful exposure of wrong has always brought about some mitigation. I have found also that exaggeration has generally increased its intensity. Truth softens even an untruthful person. Untruth can only harden him, for he is a stranger to truth,

Rather Free than Sober

Just as I am writing these notes, my assistant puts into my hand a cutting from the *Leader* containing the text of Pandit Gopinath Kunzru's letter describing in the calmest manner possible what befell him and his friend when they were purchasing in Agra brandy from a liquor shop for outward application for a patient. The volunteers would not allow them to take the brandy in spite of all the assurances of *bona fides* given by Pandit Kunzru. This is not only non-violence but is unadulterated violence. Peaceful picketing does not mean that so long as no physical violence is used, any kind of pressure could be exercised. The volunteers, if they had remained true to their pledge, would have allowed safe passage to Pandit Gopinath and his friend. The picketers' duty is merely to warn drinkers against the vice of drink, not molest them or otherwise prevent them if they will not listen. If we may force temperance upon the people believing it to be good for them, the English administrators and their Indian supporters are certainly performing an analogous operation. They too force the present system on us well believing that it is good for us. If the Swaraj volunteers may, therefore, take such liberties as they have undoubtedly taken in respect of Pandit Gopinath Kunzru, they are seeking not to change the *system* but to change *masters*. I would rather have India to be free than sober if freedom has to be sold to buy sobriety.

Foreign Cloth

On the one hand instances such as the foregoing make one cautious about even liquor picketing. On the other, complaints have reached from two places regarding the stopping of the picketing of foreign cloth shops by the Working Committee. All suspensions are to depend upon the decision of the All-India Congress Committee. But whilst one wishes the total prohibition of the use of foreign cloth, if the picketing is at all forcible, I for one cannot possibly vote for it. The clearest issue before the country is whether we are to have non-violence in thought, word and deed or whether we are to have mixed activity. But I need not speculate further, because the fate will be decided by the time these notes reach the subscribers.

From Far off Silchar

Here is another letter from Babu Tarun Ram Phookan from Silchar Jail which he this time calls Sadhana Ashram.

"Time has evidently come when serious choice of policies are to be made both by the Government and by yourself on behalf of the people. It would be cruel and unmanly if because they are armed and we are not, the Government were to depend simply upon force for the maintenance of law and order and use as much of it as they can command. On the other hand it would be unfair and ruinous to drag the people into mass civil disobedience if they have not clearly understood what it actually means and fully realised the dreadful consequences that are likely to follow. I am afraid an average non-co-operator is not fully aware what cruel means the Government might adopt in maintaining law and order and how much patience, self-sacrifice, and capacity for suffering you expect of a civil resister. I say this because I am getting everyday more and more convinced that unless we are prepared to suffer without the least desire for retaliation, we will fail in our fight. I believe that one's honesty of purpose is the only excuse for his being a non-co-operator and one's capacity for suffering is the only measure of his honesty. Pray bless us so that we may gladly suffer and yet have no hatred for those who make us suffer, for they are only *Nimitta*."

M K G

Young India

23-2-22

Shaking the Manes

BY M. K. GANDHI

How can there be any compromise whilst the British Lion continues to shake his gory claws in our faces? Lord Birkenhead reminds us that Britain has lost none of her hard fibre. Mr. Montagu tells us in the plainest language that the British are the most determined nation in the world, who will brook no interference with their purpose. Let me quote the exact words telegraphed by Kenger:—

"If the existence of our Empire were challenged, the discharge of responsibilities of the British Government to India prevented and demands were made in the very mistaken belief that we contemplated retreat from India—then India would not challenge with success the most determined people in the world, who would once again answer the challenge with all the vigour and determination at its command."

Both Lord Birkenhead and Mr. Montagu little know that India is prepared for all 'the hard fibre' that can be transported across the seas and that her challenge was issued in the September of 1920 at Calcutta that India would be satisfied with nothing less than *Swaraj* and full redress of the *Khilafat* and the Punjab wrongs. This does involve the existence of the 'Empire', and if the present custodians of the British Empire are not satisfied with its quiet transformation into a true Commonwealth of free nations, each with equal rights and each having the power to secede at will from an honourable and friendly partnership, all the determination and vigour of 'the most determined people in the world' and the 'hard fibre' will have to be spent in India in a vain effort to crush the spirit that has risen and that will neither bend nor break. It is true that we have no 'hard fibre'. The rice-eating, puny millions of India seem to have resolved upon achieving their own destiny without any further tutelage and without arms. In the Lokamanya's language it is their 'birthright', and they will have it in spite of the 'hard fibre' and in spite of the vigour and determination with which it may be administered. India cannot and will not answer this insolence with insolence, but if she remains true to her pledge, her prayer to God to be delivered from such a scourge will certainly not go in vain. No empire intoxicated with the red wine of power and plunder of weaker races has yet lived long in this world, and this 'British Empire', which is based upon organised exploitation of physically weaker races or the earth and upon a continuous exhibition of brute force, cannot live if there is a just God ruling the universe. Little do these so-called representatives of the British nation realise that India has already given many of her best men to be dealt with by the British 'hard fibre'. Had Chauri Chaura not interrupted the even course of the national sacrifice, there would have been still greater and more delectable offerings placed before the Lion, but God had willed it otherwise. There is nothing, however, to prevent all those representatives in Downing Street and Whitehall from doing their worst. I am aware that I have written strongly about the insolent threat that has come from across the seas, but it is high time that the British

people were made to realise that the fight that was commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many months or many years and whether the representatives of Britain re-enact all the indescribable orgies of the Mutiny days with redoubled force or whether they do not. I shall only hope and pray that God will give India sufficient humility and sufficient strength to remain non-violent to the end. Submission to the insolent challenges that are cabled out on due occasions is now an utter impossibility.

Mill Cloth

BY M. K. GANDHI

If handspun and handwoven *khaddar*, whether cotton, wool or silk is to be the order of the day, what is the place of mill cloth in the national economy, is the question often asked. If millions of villagers could receive, understand and take up the message of the spinning wheel to-day, I know that there is no room for mill cloth whether foreign or Indian in our domestic economy and that the nation will be all the better for its entire disappearance.

This statement has nothing to do with machinery or with the propaganda for boycott of foreign cloth. It is purely and simply a question of the economic condition of the Indian masses.

But unless Providence comes to the rescue and miraculously and immediately drives the masses to the spinning wheel as to a haven of refuge, the Indian mills must continue to supplement the *khaddar* manufacture for a few years to come at any rate. It is devoutly to be wished that a successful appeal could be made to the great mill-owners to regard the mill industry as a national trust and that they should realise its proper place. The millowners cannot wish to make money at the expense of the masses. They should on the contrary model their business in keeping with the national requirements and wipe out the reproach that was justly levelled against them during the Bengal Partition agitation. Even now complaints continue to come from Calcutta and elsewhere that Indian mills are charging for their *dhoties* more than Manchester although their *dhoties* are inferior to the Manchester. If the information is correct it is highly unpatriotic and such a policy of graft is likely to damage both the cause and the country. At the moment when the country is going through the travail of a new birth, surely it is wicked to charge inordinate prices and thus not merely to stand aloof from the popular movement but actually to be callously indifferent to it.

The millowners might also, if they will take a larger view of the situation, understand, appreciate and foster the *khaddar* movement and study the wants of the people and suit their manufactures to the new needs of the country.

But whether they do so or not, the country's march to freedom cannot be made to depend upon any corporation or groups of men. This is a mass manifestation. The masses are moving rapidly towards deliverance and they must move whether with the aid of the organised capital or without. This must therefore be a movement independent of capital and yet not antagonistic to it. Only if capital came to the aid of the masses, it would add to the credit of the capitalists and hasten the advent of the happy day.

Nor was it otherwise before. India's history is not one of strained relations between capital and labour. The conception of four divisions is as religious as it is economic and political.

And the condition has not been affected for the worse by the admixture of Islamic culture which is essentially religious and therefore beneficial to the poor. Islam seems to forbid the hoarding of capital as it literally forbids usury.

And even at the present moment it is not possible to say that capital is standing out. It was the modest capitalist who subscribed so liberally to the Tilak Swaraj fund. But it has to be admitted with pain that the bulk of the millowners unfortunately stood out. Manufacture of piecegoods is the largest industry in the country. It is time for it to make its choice. Will it make it or will it drift?

In Cold Blood

In Bengal

In Bengal the Official Enquiry Committee over the Entally disturbances are still receiving illuminating evidence to prove how the authorities left the people entirely at the mercy of European Sergeants and Civil Guard hooligans on that occasion.

"Wajid Khan, Head Constable of Police, Entally Police Station, examined, said that six constables came to witness at Mowlali where he went to make purchases and told him that there was a *gomol* at Ismail Street by *Sahablog* who had become drunk. Witness subsequently saw two men brought in a phaeton by a man who told witness that they had been shot by a *Sahab*. Another man told witness that there was indiscriminate shooting and invited him to come sharp. Witness at once proceeded and at the crossing of Ismail Street and Gope Lane he saw fifty men standing shouting that the one-eyed *Sahab* had been firing shots. Constable Hridaynand Pande got up on the wall of premises No. 25 and told witness that a gun was being pointed towards him from the terrace of No. 24. Witness saw Edgar, son of Mr. Throes, who had a gun in his hand and Mr. Reed who had a revolver with him. The Sergeants subsequently came to the Maidan. They were joined by half a dozen Anglo-Indians who came out of Mr. Reed's house. The Sergeants began to disperse the crowd. While the latter were dispersing, the Anglo-Indians began to strike them with *dandass* and *mugurs*. About half an hour after a dead body was brought in a second class phaeton to Ismail Street. The body was removed to the hospital. Six other wounded men were also taken to hospital in a motor lorry."

The People's Protection Society have taken up the investigation of the case of assault on a Bengali lady near Mr. C. R. Das's house after the dispersal by the police of a public meeting held there and are gathering all possible evidence on the matter. The lady's own evidence has been already published and seems to point that Mr. Kidd (the police officer) was her assailant. She said that on finding some ladies at the meeting she also went there and took her seat with the ladies. The police did not surround the meeting at first, but as soon as the "*Gora Sahib*" arrived he began to drive away the people. The *Sahib* had something like a baton in his hand. She saw the *Sahib* just behind her when she received a blow on the head. She fell down and did not turn back to see who had struck her. There was nobody between her and the *Sahib*.

On February 1st, a batch of 64 volunteers was released from the Presidency Jail in Calcutta. On their way back a police sergeant came upon them and began to beat them with a baton. This happened near the shop of Messrs. Whiteaway Laidlaw and Co. An Anglo-Indian joined the sergeant in beating the volunteers. The sergeant even dealt blows upon those who fell to the ground,

some of whom were injured. On the same day when a meeting assembled at College Square in Calcutta, the police first arrested the volunteers who organised it, but as soon as a lady speaker rose up to address the meeting, the sergeants began to belabour the people with *lathis*. While trying to protect a young boy from the assault of a sergeant, Mrs. Mazmudar received a blow from a *lathi* on her left wrist which has seriously injured her left arm.

Another heroic exploit of Mr. Kidd (Assistant Commissioner of Police, Calcutta) has been reported in the Calcutta papers. Some 27 ladies accompanied by about a hundred volunteers started from the Nari Karma Mandir and went in a procession through Russa Road, Puddapaker Road, Chakrabare Road, Ray street and Elgin Road. At Elgin Road, "the procession came across Inspector Babu Hem Lahiri and another police officer who followed it. A little later, they were reinforced by a large police force who came marching onward, divided the party, separating the ladies from the men and arrested all the male volunteers. The ladies then proceeded via Shambhoo Nath Pandit's street surrounded on all sides by the police who formed a ring round them. They were allowed to march without any molestation through Harish Mukherjee Road, and Hazra Road. But when the procession neared the bridge, Mr. Kidd with a number of European sergeants arrived. Mr. Kidd issued an order and the police closed up their ranks, stopped the ladies from proceeding any further. A large crowd assembled on the spot. The sergeants began belabouring the crowd indiscriminately and chasing and hitting the passers-by also. They assaulted even the people who had out of fear taken shelter in neighbouring houses. Meanwhile, the ladies asked Mr. Lahiri to allow them to proceed on their way. But Mr. Lahiri told them that Mr. Kidd had ordered that they were not to be allowed to proceed any farther. On being asked if they were under arrest, Mr. Lahiri told them that they were not. About this time Mr. Kidd himself came near the ladies and started pushing Indian constables towards the ladies with the result that the police fell on the ladies some of whom, in their turn, fell on the road. After this, the ladies again made an attempt to proceed on their way, but they were not allowed and were told that they were under arrest. Mr. Kidd himself came up to Mrs. Mazmudar and took hold of her wounded arm. On this she collided against the other ladies and fell to the ground bringing down some of them with her. Thereafter, the ladies were put in a lorry and were driven through the Outram Road. Here the ladies were told that the lorry was out of order and, they were requested to get into motor cars."

It will be remembered that the ladies were under arrest, but the officers instead of taking them direct to the Police Station, directed the drivers to go to a different direction. In the meantime they disappeared. The arrested ladies then reported themselves to the Thana where the officer in charge Mr. Bard told them that they were not wanted, paid for the taries and sent them all home. Of the persons wounded on this occasion the following have been so far traced:

"(1) Babu Narendra Nath Ghose, Teacher Kalighat H. E. School, got *lathi* wound on his head, bleeding profusely. He was taken to Dr. S. N. Chowdhury who attended him.

(2) A cooly was struck so severely on the head that he had to be removed to Ghose Dutt's pharmacy. His condition seems to be serious.

(3) Sjt Lalit Mohon Das, son of Dr. N. N. Das was struck on the head; the injury is serious.

(4) Ram Charan, 122, Monoharpukur Road, swelling on left arm.

(5) Dwarka Halui of Chetla Hat, bâton wound on the right parietal bone.

(6) Birendra Nath Bhattacharjee, 88 Chaulpati Road, Dhirendra Kumar Banerji of 17-2-1 Shahasagar and a cook of Mr. P. N. Das, 118, Kalighat Road were chased into the house of Khetra Babu and beaten there. The last 5 persons were examined by Dr. J. N. Gupta."

The assault on Principal Maitra of Calcutta by a British soldier on 10th December last drew an apology from the Governor of Bengal, but Sir Henry Wheeler, an Executive Councillor and a staunch champion of the traditions of the Civil Service, qualified that apology by a remark in the Council that although the incident was much to be deplored, the Principal's action might also be construed as obstructing a soldier in the discharge of his duties even according to the canons prevalent among the London police. The Principal challenged Sir Henry's statement and the correspondence that passed between them ended abruptly by Sir Henry's sending merely a formal acknowledgment to the reasoned refutation by the Principal of the former's halting justification based on facts derived second-hand. Principal Maitra describes the incident of the assault thus:—

"A number of people who were standing quietly on the footpath near the Kristodas Pal statue at the crossing of Harrison Road and College street, a place where large crowds are often to be seen, were being pursued by soldiers gun in hand. There was no obstruction of traffic. I felt it to be my duty as a citizen to ask what was the offence committed by the men who were thus pursued. The reply I received was the assault on me by an officer. To interpret this as "obstructing the military in the discharge of their duties" is, I am constrained to say in self-defence, to find an offence where none was committed and to shield the guilty person." What answer did Sir Henry give? He accused the Principal Maitra of being under the unfortunate misapprehension that people "were being pursued by soldiers, gun in hand." On the contrary, according to Sir Henry, although he was not present on the occasion "the picket on duty were acting under orders in clearing back the crowd in order to establish a military post on the other side of the street." Therefore, he contends, it was strictly accurate to say that the Principal's conduct in questioning their action on the spot would have been interpreted in London as obstructing the military in the discharge of their duties. There was no enquiring into the matter. Had there been one, Principal Maitra could have shown in what manner the operation of "clearing back the crowd" was carried out. He even said, "Admitting for argument's sake that I had interfered with the military in the discharge of their duties, the officer would have been entirely within his rights in taking down my name or even arresting me; and a prosecution would have given me an opportunity of defending my action in public. He had no right to commit an assault." But the Principal evidently forgot that in a country like this it is easy for the authorities to ignore an assault on an Indian, however high-placed he may be.

A non-official Enquiry Committee have collected evidence, which will be published shortly, on the shooting incident by the authorities at Salaga Hat in Serajganj, Bengal,

which as we reported resulted in some 4 or 5 deaths and several persons being wounded. As there is no town near the place of occurrence, the District Congress Committee have organised a medical mission under competent doctors and propose to erect a temporary hospital there, for which they have appealed for public help. The exact number of the wounded has not yet been ascertained and it is believed that unless such a hospital is established, many people will die for want of medical attendance. The head of the mission, Dr. A. G. Chakrawarty, M. B. said in his deposition before the Enquiry Committee that on the very first day of his arrival a dead body was brought to him which showed a gaping bayonet wound. There was no mark of bullet wound in the body. The Doctor twice inspected the place where the shooting took place. On the first occasion he found the ground at several places drenched with blood which had coagulated. But on his second visit he observed that there were signs of wiping off blood with water and of burning of clots of blood. This, however, as the Doctor says, could not hide the hideousness of this official crime as the marks were too many and too ghastly to be so easily wiped out in that fashion.

In Assam

In Assam the political prisoners are reported to have been engaged even in pulling carts heavily loaded with fuel etc. through the public roads. Some have also been given the work of pressing oil and others the laborious work of husking rice with *dhenki*. Even children are not immune from the wrath of the authorities there. On the arrest of Mr. Mohan Chandra Gohani of Dibrugarh Congress Committee on 25th January last, some 16 boys between the ages of 8 and 9 went to see him at the police station. The police arrested them all and locked up eight, the rest being treated with blows, slaps and abuses.

This sort of heroism was repeated also at Sibsagar, another town of Assam by Mr. C. S. Gunning I. C. S., the Sub-Divisional officer of the place on the 30th of January last on the occasion of the arrest of a Congress worker, Mr. Bandhar Sharma, who was arrested at his native village. Mr. Sharma's co-villagers and others numbering in all about 600 persons followed him in a procession as he was conveyed to the town. When the news of their approach reached him, Mr. Gunning with twenty-four armed Garkhas hurried to protect the town from this invasion of unarmed men capable of doing, perhaps, no more mischief than shouting *Jais*. He fell upon the procession as soon as he met it, pushing, assaulting and wounding the people without any discrimination with *lathis* and butt-ends of rifles. The head of one volunteer was broken. Some young boys who had taken shelter in a private residence were pursued even there. After thus dispersing the procession, Mr. Gunning led his victorious band of troops to the office of the Congress Committee, drove out the inmates thereof, and arrested the President of the Committee, Mr. Laxmikanta Baruah, B. A. Mr. Baruah's white cap was forcibly snatched away. Violent hands were laid on him. He was pushed and forcibly paraded with the Garkhas who took him to the Jail. The S. D. O. then proceeded, perhaps, to root out all trace of the Congress from his jurisdiction. He not merely seized all the papers of the office, but allowed or instigated the Garkhas to violently pull down the bungalow in which the office was located, although it was the property of a local contractor and was occupied by the Congress merely on lease.

At Jorhat, on the 20th January last, a volunteer was quietly sitting near the opium shop in the Municipal Bazar when Head Constable Krishnaram saw him. He at once

caught hold of the throat of the young man and thrashed him again and again to the ground till he became senseless. The tea-planters near Jorhat have been invested with the powers of the police to arrest and detain persons. Even the tea-coolies in some of the gardens have been in-oxicated with the taste of power which the symbol of a piece of red-cloth, the insignia of British authority and British might, in India brings to one, as they have been enlisted as special constables. The result is that the right of the people to assemble in their weekly or bi-weekly *hats* for marketing purposes is being whimsically controlled and violated by the planters. One such *hat* was looted by the red-turbaned coolies styled special constables. At Naharani in Golaghat, the people having decided to hold their *hat* outside the zone of influence of the plantations, it was proclaimed illegal and forcibly dispersed when, it is reported, two volunteers were so brutally assaulted that their condition is said to be precarious.

Even religious performances are obstructed there. *Namaskars* is a traditional way of devotional worship, when the people give offerings in the name of God and sing songs in His praise. On 23rd January the villagers of Nakachari held such a *Namaskaran* ceremony, when the D. S. P. with a posse of constables and Gurkhas ordered them to disperse. The people heeded not this unlawful intervention, but the police cut down the posts of the pandal where the ceremony was being held and set fire to it. The people saved themselves by quickly leaving the flaming pandal. The offerings were burnt to ashes.

In United Provinces

The following two diaries of incidents in two districts in U. P., viz. the districts of Etah and Basti, will give the reader some idea of things that have happened throughout U. P. during the last month and a half. We print them in order to show to what test of patience and endurance the people were put and how even their lawful activities were attempted to be smothered by official lawlessness and violence:—

District Basti

February 5th.—A meeting held at Khalilabad in contravention of order under section 144; thirty arrests made, but all released. At night seven men were called out of their houses and sent to Basti Jail.

February 6th.—A procession came out and a meeting was held. Forty-five arrests were made, of whom thirty were released.

February 7th.—Another meeting held and seven arrests made.

February 9th.—The District Magistrate arrived with mounted and armed police and posted them at every corner of the town. Every in-coming volunteer from outside villages was stopped and forced to go back. Police raided Congress and Swadeshi offices and broke open doors and threatened to shoot two volunteers on guard. Fifty volunteers and workers were arrested and severely beaten. All people clothed in khadi and white caps without any exception were beaten and arrested. Some of them were, however, released, the rest being taken to places yet unknown. Police atrocities continue. The Congress office is under guard. Traffic is stopped. Volunteers are subjected to ill-treatment and humiliation.

February 10th.—Tehsil and District Congress Committees were searched but nothing except volunteers' pledge forms were found.

District Etah

11th December, 1921.—Sjt. Raj Bahadur, M. A. L. L. B. President D. C. C. who had renounced the titles of *Rai Sahab* and *M. B. E.* and a Government Jagir together

with several other sanads and medals, and had suspended his lucrative practice in March 1921, was arrested. Along with him was arrested Sjt. Baboo Ram Verma, an ex-Vakil and Secretary of the D. C. C.

12th December.—Sjt. Raj Bahadur sentenced to six months' and Sjt. Baboo Ram Verma to one year's simple imprisonment.

13th December.—The Secretary town C. C. of Kasganj and the Secretary of the Congress Committee at Mahabra arrested at Allahabad while attending a meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee and sentenced to 18 months' R. I. each.

14th December.—The town of Etah, Kasganj and Mahabra are proclaimed and the captain of the volunteer organisation arrested and sentenced to one year's R. I.

2nd January.—Volunteers while patrolling the streets of Etah suddenly overtaken by a police force under the S. P. and some Sub-Inspectors, the officers being armed with revolvers. Uniforms, badges and flags were seized from the volunteers. One volunteer, Nur Mahomed by name, openly flogged by the S. P. resulting in one wound and several scratches on his body.

7th January.—The Superintendent of Police forcibly dispersed a public meeting, assaulting and flogging the people when they cried "Jais" while dispersing.

11th January.—The New President and the new Secretary of the Congress Committee arrested and sentenced to six months' and one year's simple each, also a fine of Rs. 50 each, which having not been paid some of their property was attached.

12th and 13th January.—The S. P. beat volunteers while they were picketing liquor-shops at Kasganj. Two volunteers received wounds and one had a tooth broken with the butt-end of S. P.'s pistol.

14th-20th January.—Four prominent Congress and Khilafat workers arrested at Kasganj. On the 16th and 17th volunteers were beaten at Jaleswar. Pt. Sri Ram Sharma, Secretary Jaleswar C. C. received a deep cut on the head being struck by the S. P.'s pistol. The Collector himself is reported to have taken part in this assault.

21st January.—The four prominent workers of Kasganj mentioned above sentenced to different terms of R. I. and subjected to hard labour.

In Agra there is no notice prohibiting processions etc, yet the District Magistrate with three other European officers created a sensation in the city by forcibly dispersing a procession of Khilafat volunteers on the 11th instant and assaulting people in the bazaar. The volunteers, it is reported, were bereged in a narrow lane, and had not the Khilafat Secretary promptly ordered their dispersal, there would perhaps have been a carnage equal to, if not heavier than, that of Jallianwalla, as it is said an order to open fire was given. In the bazaar, Mr. Adams an officer of the Crown, along with other fellow police officers were seen freely using their whips and sticks. Even old and respectable men like Sjt. Chand Mal, B. A. L. L. B. president of the District Congress Committee and Babu Peary Lal Bhargava, Agent Bhargava Commercial Bank Agra, were not spared. The latter had to return home with a broken head. Mr. Chandmal asked Mr. Adams not to beat Md. Ismail who was helping to disperse the people. But this was enough to bring on his arrest along with Md. Ismail. Sjt. Ragbhir Dayal Kapoor a member of the Congress Executive Committee was beaten in a like manner. Another member of the Executive Committee B. Banwari Lal was arrested while distributing handbills near the Kotwari exhorting the people to observe *hartal* on the 18th, the day of the Prince's visit.

A Great Statement

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's statement to the Court has been just received by me. It covers thirty three closely typed foolscap sheets. But it is worth reading. The original is naturally in the Maulana's polished Urdu. The English translation is not bad, but one could wish it was possible to get a better translation. The statement has much literary beauty. It is elaborate and eloquent. It is bold and uncompromising but subdued. A sarcastic vein runs through the whole of it. It is an eloquent thesis giving the Maulana's views on the Khilafat and Nationalism. I hope that it will be possible to procure printed copies of the statement. I would advise the Maulana's secretary to have the statement carefully revised.

As I laid down the statement I felt more clearly than ever the necessity of boycott of law courts. But for the boycott, we could never have evolved the fearless strength that we have. Instead of the noble declarations of the President, Lalaji, Panditji we would have had pettifoggish lingual quibbles which cannot raise a nation. Without the boycott we could never have had the Maulana's statement which in itself constitutes good political education.

What a change between 1919 and 1922—nervous fear of sentences and all kinds of defences in 1919; utter disregard of sentences and no defence in 1922! In 1919 the nation could have done no other wise; in 1922 it could have done no less without deserving execration of the world. The effect of the boycott is not to be measured by the number of suspensions of practice. The true measure is to be found in the departure of the halo that only two years ago surrounded the courts of law. They still remain the haunts of money-changers and speculators. They are no longer repositories of national or even individual liberty. That is to be found in the stout hearts that the nation is fast developing.

The Maulana's statement is hardly meant for, though addressed to, the Court. It is meant for the public. It is really an oration deserving penal servitude for life. Well might the Maulana laconically exclaim after his one year's rigorous imprisonment, "This falls far short of what I was waiting for."

The following extracts which I have culled from the statement will enable the reader to form his own conclusions.

M. K. G.

"I had no intention of submitting here any statement oral or written. This is a place in which there is for us no hope, no demand, and no grievance of any sort. This is a turn, without passing through which, we cannot reach our goal.... Non-co-operation is essentially the result of absolute desperation at existing circumstances.... I want to make it quite distinct that the term non-co-operation applies only to the Government, its administrative system and its executive and political principles and not to any persons or individuals.

"Like most occurrences of the present era this movement also is nothing novel. History bears ample testimony to the fact that whenever a ruling authority has taken up arms against liberty and truth, courts of justice have lent themselves admirably to purposes of a most facile and unfailing weapon for the practice of such iniquity. The authority of the law courts is a power which can be used equally to do justice and to perpetrate injustice. In the hands of an equitable Government they are the best instruments of justice and truth; but in the hands of

tyrannical and autocratic Governments no weapon is deadlier than these for purposes of revenge and inquiry. No pure-minded and truth-loving section of humanity can be found, including even the inventors and savants of science, which has not some time or other stood in the dock before a court of law.

"The iniquities of courts of law constitute an endless list and history has not yet finished singing the elegy of such miscarriages of justice. In that list we observe a holy personage like Jesus who had to stand in his time before a foreign court convicted even as the worst of criminals. We see also in the same list Socrates who was sentenced to be poisoned for no other crime than that of being the most truthful person of his age. We meet also the name of that great Florentine martyr to truth, the inventor Galileo, who refused to belie his observations and researches merely because their avowal was a crime in the eyes of constituted authority. When I ponder on the great and significant history of the convicts' dock and find that the honour of standing in that place belongs to me to-day, my soul becomes steeped in thankfulness and praise of God....

"The bureaucracy in India is nothing more nor less than the domination which powerful individuals will always normally attain over a nation decaying by its own neglect and internal weaknesses. In the natural course of things such dominant authority cannot possibly countenance any nationalistic awakening or agitations for progress, reform or justice. And as such agitation would spell the inevitable downfall of its dominant power, it seeks to kill all agitation by declaring it a crime against constituted authority. No power would tamely submit to movements likely to bring about its own decline, however much such decline might be in the ultimate interests of justice. This posture of affairs is merely a struggle for existence in which both sides fight desperately for their principles. An awakened nation aspires to attain what it considers its birth-right and the dominant authority would fain not budge an inch from its position of unquestioned sway. The contention might almost be advanced that the latter party even like its opponents is not open to any blame in as much as it is merely putting up a fight for its own survival and it is quite an incidental matter that its existence happens to be inimical to perpetuation of justice. We cannot deny facts of human nature and its inseparable characteristics. Like good, evil also desires to live in this world and struggle for its own existence. In India also such a struggle for the survival of the fittest has already commenced. Most certainly, therefore, nothing can be a higher crime against the domination of Government, as at present established, than the agitation which seeks to terminate its unlimited authority in the name of liberty and justice. I fully admit that I am not only guilty of such agitation but that I belong to that band of pioneers who originally sowed the seed of such agitation in the heart of our nation and dedicated their whole lives to the cherishing and breeding of this holy discontent....

"The history of politics teaches us that foolishness and recklessness of consequences are always the companions of a decadent power. The Government thought that by sheer repression it would annihilate the Khilafat and the Swaraj movements and stop the *hartal* of the 24th. Accordingly it declared the Volunteer Corps to be unlawful and many workers were indiscriminately arrested. It fancied that the Khilafat and the Congress Committees would become inactive and inactive by the mere arrest of the Executive and the prohibition of the Volunteer Corps. Thus

would the *hartal* be automatically stopped. But very soon the Government came to learn that repression when practised against national awakening is no fatal thing for a nation but instead breathes new life into it. Neither was the *hartal* stopped, nor did the Khilafat and the Congress Committees become moribund, nor was the work of the volunteers stopped even for a single day....

"According to my belief it is my duty to speak out at the present moment and I cannot fall short of the full performance of my duty, just because it might be construed into a crime... Most certainly I have stated that the present Government is oppressive. If I do not say this, what else am I to say? I fail to understand why it should be expected of me that I should call things by any but their right names. I refuse absolutely to call black white.... I have certainly been asserting that only two paths are open to us in this matter of our duty. The Government has to refrain from all this iniquity and deprivation of liberty; or if it cannot bring itself to do so, it has to be wiped off... I believe in the evils of the present Government most assuredly. I could not at the same time pray that it may not mend its ways and yet be long lived....

"Now, what is the reason that such is the firm belief of myself and of millions of my countrymen? The reasons for this have now become so patent to common knowledge that in the words of Milton, 'Next to the Sun itself they are about the clearest and most manifest facts in existence. About such universal facts all that I can say is—don't deny them' I will only add that this faith of mine exists because I am an Indian, because I am a Muslim and first and last because I am a man.

"It is my belief that liberty is the natural and God-given right of man. No man and no bureaucracy consisting of men has got the right to make the servants of God its own slave. However attractive be the euphemisms invented for 'subjugation' and 'slavery', still slavery is slavery and it is opposed to the will and to the canons of God. I therefore do not consider the bureaucracy of India to be a legitimate sovereign and I consider it a bounden duty to liberate my country from its yoke. The notorious fallacies of 'Reform' and 'gradual transference of powers' can produce no illusions and pitfalls in my unequivocal and definite faith. Liberty being the primary right of man, it is nobody's personal privilege to prescribe limits or apportion shares in the distribution of it. To say that a nation should get its liberty in graduated stages is the same as saying that an owner should by right receive his property only in bits and a creditor his dues by instalments..... Whatever philanthropic acts might be performed by a man who has usurped our property, his usurpation would still continue to be utterly illegal.

"Evil cannot be classified into good and bad. All that is in fairness possible is to fix its gradations with respect to quality. For instance we can say very heinous robbery and less heinous robbery, but who can speak of good robbery and bad robbery? I cannot, therefore, at all conceive of any justification for such domination because by its very nature it is an act of iniquity....

"Such is my duty as a man and as an Indian and religious injunctions have also taught me the same lesson. In fact in my view the greatest proof of the truth of my religion is that it is another name for the teaching of the rights of man. I am a Mahomedan and by virtue of being a Mahomedan this has become my religious

duty. Islam never accepts as valid a sovereignty which is personal or is constituted of a bureaucracy of a handful of paid executive. Islam constitutes a perfected system of freedom and democracy. It has been sent down to get back for the human race the liberty which has been snatched away from it. Monarchs, foreign dominations, selfish religious pontiffs and powerful sections had alike misappropriated this liberty of man. They had been fondly nursing the belief that power and possession spell the highest right. The moment Islam appeared, it proclaimed that the highest right is not might but right itself. No one except God has got the right to make serfs and slaves of God's creatures. All men are equal and their fundamental rights are on a par. He only is greater than others, Whose deeds are the most righteous of all..

"The sovereignty of the Prophet of Islam and of the Khalif was a perfected conception of democratic equality and it only could take shape with the whole nation's free will, unity, suffrage and election. This is the reason why the sovereign or president of a republic is like a designated Khalif; Khilafat literally means nothing more nor less than a representation; so that all the authority a Khalif possesses consists in his representative character and he possesses no domination beyond this representative authority.

"If then Islam defines it as a duty of Mahomedans to refuse to acknowledge the moral justification even of an Islamic Government, if full play is not granted in it to the will and franchise of the nation, it is perfectly superfluous to add what under Islam would be the ruling given about a foreign bureaucracy. If to-day there was to be established in India an Islamic Government but if the system of that Government was based upon personal monarchy or upon bureaucratic oligarchy, then to protest against the existence of such a Government would still be my primary duty as a Mahomedan. I would still call the Government oppressive and demand its replacement.

"I frankly confess that this original conception of Islamic sovereignty could not be uniformly maintained in its primal purity on account of the selfishness and personal domineering of the later Mahomedan sovereigns. The mighty magnificence of the Emperors of ancient Rome and of the Shahs of Persia had attracted the Mahomedan sovereigns powerfully to the dubious glory of great monarchical empires. They began to prefer the majestic figures of a Kaiser or a Khosroe to the simple dignity of the original Khalifs clad oftentimes in old tattered cloaks. No period of the dynastic sovereignties of Islam has however failed to produce some true Muslim martyrs who have made public declarations of the tyrannies and transgressions of such monarchies and had joyfully and triumphantly suffered all miseries and hardships which inevitably confronted them in the thorny paths of duty.

"The holy prophet of Islam has preached the following doctrine to the Muslims: 'That man is blessed with the best of deaths who proclaims the truth in the face of a tyrannical administration and is slaughtered in punishment of this deed.' The Scripture of Islam, the holy Quran defines the greatest attribute of the true Muslim to be 'that they fear not any being except God and whatever they consider to be the truth, they reck not any authority in the public proclamation of such truth.' The Quran further defines the national characteristics of the Muslims as follows: 'They are the witnesses to truth on God's earth.' As long therefore as

they continue to be Muslims they cannot desist from giving this public evidence. In fact it has designated Muslims as witnesses i.e. givers of the evidence of truth. When the prophet of Islam extracted a promise of righteousness from any person one of the clauses of such a bond used to be, 'I will always proclaim the truth in whatever condition and wherever I may happen to be.' ...

"An outstanding object lesson in speaking the truth which their national history presents to the Muslims is to be found in the order of an autocratic monarch by which each organ of a victim's body was cut off. The charge against the victim was that he had proclaimed the inequity of the tyrant. Firm as a rock he stood and took his punishment in all its heinous stages, but his tongue right on to the moment when it was severed went on proclaiming that that autocrat was a tyrant. This is an incident of the reign of the Emperor Abdul Malik whose dom extended from Syria to Sind. Can any one then attach any weight to a sentence under Section 124 as compared to this terrible penalty? I concede that it is the moral decadence of Muslims and their renouncing the real Islamic life that is responsible for the bringing about of this fallen state.

"While I am penning these lies I know there is still living in India many a Muslim who through his weakness pays homage to this very tyranny. But the failure of man to act up to the spirit of certain tenets cannot belie the intrinsic truth of those principles.

"The tenets of Islam are preserved in its scriptures. These, under no circumstances, make it permissible for Muslims to enjoy life at the expense of liberty. A true Muslim has either to immolate himself or to retain his liberty, no other course is open for him under his religion. To-day the Muslims have come to a firm decision that in freeing their country from its slavery they will take their fullest share along with their Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Christian brethren... It is now their belief that to expect any justice from the British Government would be nothing but pure self-deception, so that if they really aspire to obtain justice there is only one single avenue leading to it, which is the attainment of Swaraj—meaning the Government of India for India and by the Indians themselves. In short, on these points my admissions have ever been absolutely clear and unequivocal.

"The present Government is a most illegitimate form of bureaucracy. It is openly spurning the wishes and aspirations of millions of humanity. It has always given the preference over justice to prestige. ... Does tyranny acquire a right to be given a different name simply because it happens to be powerful and to possess jails?

"In the words of the good and truthful national hero of Italy, Joseph Mazzini, I repeat 'we cannot possibly deny your evil doings just because temporal power happens to be in your possession for a time.'...

"Continuously in the last twelve years I have been training my community and my country in demanding their rights and their liberty. I was only 18 years old when I first started speaking and writing on this theme. I have consecrated my whole being to it and sacrificed the best part of my life, meaning the whole of my youth in my infatuation for this

ideal. For four years I have suffered internment but during my internment even, I have never desisted from pushing on my work and inviting people to this national goal. This is the perennial mission of my life and if I live at all I elect to live only for this single purpose. Even as the Quran says, 'My prayers and my observances and my life and my death are all for my Lord, the God of the Universe'. I am the first pioneer in this latest phase of that Islamic movement in India which has created a tremendous revolution in the political world of the Indian Muslims and has gradually elevated them to that pinnacle of national consciousness on which they are seen to-day. In 1912 I started an Urdu journal, the *Al-Hilal*, which was the organ of this movement and the object of the publication of which was mainly what I have declared above. It is an actual fact that within the three years it had created a new atmosphere in the religious and the political life of Mohammedans of India

"In this war of liberty and justice, I have adopted the path of non-violent non-cooperation. Opposed to us stands an authority armed with the complete equipment for oppression, excess and bloodshed. But we place our reliance and trust, next to God, only upon our own limitless power of sacrifice and unshakable fortitude.

"Unlike Mahatma Gandhi my belief is not that armed force should never be opposed by armed force. It is my belief that such opposing of violence with violence is fully in harmony with the natural law of God in those circumstances under which Islam permits the use of such violence. But at the same time for purposes of liberation of India and the present agitation, I entirely agree with all the arguments of Mahatma Gandhi and I have complete confidence in his honesty. It is my definite conviction that India cannot attain success by means of arms nor is it advisable for it to adopt that course. India can only triumph through non-violent agitation and India's triumph will be a memorable example of the victory of moral force.

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"This is the reason why I have always preached to the masses peaceful agitation and have invariably prescribed it as the first postulate of success. This would appear distinctly from these speeches also. I am one of the handful of Muslim leaders who can honestly claim that if it was not for the determined and effective control that they have exercised in keeping the Muslim public within the bounds of non-cooperation, there is no knowing where the excitement of the mobs, under the recent trying provocations, may not have led them and what grave situations may not have taken shape with respect to the Khilafat problem....

"What I have stated in the beginning I will repeat in conclusion, that what the Government is doing with us to-day is no extraordinary procedure for which it can be particularly blameable. It is second nature to every usurping authority to put up a determined opposition and repression, to suppress national awakening and we know that human nature cannot be altered to suit our own end. This natural failing finds expression equally in individuals and communities. How many people are there in this world who would give back any article which they had already got in their possession for the mere reason that they are not legitimately entitled to it? How then can we nurse a fond hope of such voluntary surrender with respect to a whole continent? Power also is not normally prone to admit facts just because they are logical and proved. As a matter of fact it waits for the emergence of a counterstrength and when this does present itself, it bows its head down before the most improper demand. Patience, therefore, and a tug of war of strength are unavoidable.

"This position is one which should be accepted as a normal and everyday occurrence without surprise and without demur. I will even go the length of admitting that the present repression is certainly not too drastic as compared to the worst instances of inhuman oppressions and terrible persecutions which history presents to us. I am not quite certain whether this is due to immaturity of the national sense of sacrifice or to the imperfect development of the present system of repression. The future alone will decide this. Just as the beginning of such political tug of war has uniformly been on a more or less similar lines, even so its end has been the same in the history of all nations. I know that if our spirit of liberty and justice proves by actual demonstration to be real and unconquerable, this very Government which is to-day putting us into the dock, will be obliged to give us a right royal reception as triumphant patriots.

"Before I conclude my statement, I want to say a few words about those countrymen of mine who are working against me in this prosecution. Previously I have stated somewhere that the work of the C. I. D. is a combination of ignorance and trickery. This I have said from the personal experience that I have gained from countless prosecutions. All the same, however, I admit that all the C. I. D. people who have given evidence against me have not deliberately made any lying statements, barring perhaps the confidence which they have expressed in their own work.... I believe that the confidence which they have expressed on the results of their own work and the motives which have dictated their actions are certainly sinful. But at the same time I also know their weakness. They are only doing this for the sake of the appointments which bring them a few rupees and their only crime is that they do not possess the moral courage to give preference to truth over everything else. In my heart, therefore, I linger no rancour or accusation.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Begum Abul Kalam Azad sends me the following telegraphic message by letter post:

"Judgment has been delivered to-day in the case against my husband Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He has been sentenced to only one year rigorous imprisonment. This is astonishingly less than what I was waiting for. If conviction and imprisonment be the reward of national service, you will admit that great injustice has been done to him in the inadequacy of the sentence. It does not even approximate to the minimum of his deserts. I make bold to inform you that I offer my humble services to fill up the gap caused by his absence in the rank of national workers in Bengal. All those activities which he performed will still continue to be carried on normally. This is a heavy burden for my shoulders, but I have fullest faith in God's help. Undoubtedly the void created by his absence is not merely in work in Bengal but also in all-India activities. It is, however, beyond my fragile frame to endeavour to make up for the bigger void. Before this, during his last four years' internment, I have gone through a first test, and I am confident that in this my second trial, I will with God's grace come off triumphant. For the last six years my health has been very broken down and mental exertion has become a positive torture. That was why the Maulana hitherto insisted on my not taking an active part in his activities and patriotic strivings. I had, however, all along determined to consecrate my whole being completely and unreservedly to national duties after his conviction. From to-day I will discharge all the duties connected with the Bengal Provincial Khilafat Committees with the assistance of my brother. My husband has asked me to convey to you his loving and reverent greetings and the following message: "At the present juncture both the sides—the Government and the country—are wholly unprepared for any compromise. The only duty before us is to prepare ourselves. Bengal will, in the next stage, also retain the lead which it has established today. Kindly add the name of Bengal to that of Bardoli Calcutta. And if any time comes for a settlement, do please not give to our release the importance which is unfortunately being attached to it to-day. Have the terms of settlement fixed with the single end in view of our national aspirations, unconcerned with the question of our release".

I have not yet received the telegram although the letter of advice tells me that it was sent both to Ahmedabad and Bardoli. I am able to give the telegram to the public only because the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Khilafat Committee has very kindly sent me a copy by letter-post at the instance of the Begum Sahiba. It is a matter of no small comfort that ladies, occupying the highest station in life, are coming forward one after another to step into the breach created by the withdrawal of male national workers. I tender my congratulations to Begum Abul Kalam Azad for her having offered to take her share in the public work. The readers will take to heart the message of the Maulana. It is perfectly true that neither the Government nor the country is today prepared for any compromise. The Government will not be till we have suffered long and suffered more. Bengal has certainly led in the direction. Bardoli has yet done little. Twice has it been balked of its privilege by cruel Nature, but it is a matter of no consequence whether it is Bengal or Bardoli which leads, so long as we get rid of a system which, as is daily becoming more and more clear, is based upon terrorism. In the present mood of the country there is little danger of the vital interests being sacrificed, as the Maulana fears, to the momentary pleasure of securing the release of non-cooperation prisoners.

M. K. G.

No End to My Sorrows

The Manager of the *Lokamanyu* has forwarded to me the following interview between the representative of that paper and M. Paul Richard. He asks me to publish it and to offer my remarks upon it. I do so not without great hesitation and reluctance, but often a public worker has no choice. He has to overcome reluctance as also hesitation. It was sorrowful for me to have to correct what was an honest but gross misrepresentation of my views about Shantiniketan. There are some things which one holds sacred and which one does not care to discuss in public. The interview that I am now asked to publish adds to my many sorrows. Here is it:—

“Question:—After the last postponement of civil disobedience at Bardoli, the number is increasing among the non-co-operationists who do not understand the mind of the Mahatma. What do you think about it?

“Answer:—Everything is easy to understand in the attitude of Mahatma Gandhi if one remembers that his true aim is not what people generally think, but what he has expressed to me a few days ago, saying “I do not work for freedom of India, I work for non-violence in the world and that is the difference between me and Mr. Tilak. Mr. Tilak was telling me, ‘I would sacrifice even truth for freedom of my country’ but I am ready to sacrifice even freedom for the sake of truth”. In the light of these words you can understand the reason of the actual postponement of national programme, until the spirit of violence has been shaken everywhere in India; that means probably until the end of the world!

“The mind of Mahatmaji can be expressed in a word—‘Non-violence at any cost’; just as the mind of Mrs Besant and of the moderate party can be expressed by the motto ‘Law and Order at any cost’; and such is also the will of the Government. But the will of the national soul behind and above all is ‘At any cost a new Law and a new Order.’

“This will of the new spirit in India, Asia and all over the World is the only one which by any way is sure to triumph.”

I had a rare time with M. Paul Richard. We had many happy hours together. I could see at once that our views of life were fundamentally different in some respects, but that did not matter in the slightest degree to me. We met each other as distant acquaintances. We parted as the best of friends and though it is now my lot to criticise what M. Paul Richard has said, my regard for his learning, for his humanity and his philosophy remains undiminished. But I cannot help expressing my deep regret that he should have related what was sacred conversation between him and me and that in an attenuated form. He makes me cut a sorry figure in that interview. It is not possible to deny the substance of it, and yet torn from its context and put in the language of M. Paul Richard it makes me look so utterly ridiculous. The Maharashtra party and I are endeavouring to understand each other. We are coming daily nearer. That party would rightly resent any reflection on my part upon the career or the character of one of the greatest of Indians and one who rules that party's hearts as no other man rules the hearts of any other set of men. M. Paul Richard and I were engaged in a deeply religious discourse. I was trying to give to him the fundamentals of my own faith. I was arguing upon the sharp difference that both he and I observed between us, and whilst I was elucidating my point I came upon the differences between the Lokamanya and myself in a reverent spirit. After many a frank chat with the

Lokamanya I had come to see that on some vital matters we could never agree. Drawing illustrations from his inexhaustible store of Sanskrit learning, he used to challenge my interpretation of life and frankly and bluntly would say, truth and untruth were only relative terms, but at bottom there was no such thing as truth and untruth just as there was no such thing as life and death. Whilst I could not resist the abstract presentation, I detected a flaw in its application to actual life and I put it before him in all reverence. In my opinion, we never misunderstood each other. At Sinhadag where both he and I were trying to take rest we came closer together. I noticed that he was fearless and sincere in the enunciation of his views and he tried to live up to them. I could discover also the reasons for the marvellous hold he had on millions of his countrymen. I have claimed no superiority for myself. I only know that we fundamentally differed, but my respect for him grew with greater contact, and I believe that his affection for me also grew as time went on. The remarks, therefore, that were made to M. Paul Richard were made, I assure the reader, in no disparagement of the character of the illustrious deceased and I hope that the bald presentation of that difference in the interview will not in any way acerbate the members of the great Maharashtra party whose hearty co-operation in the national struggle I value so highly and in order to conciliate whom I go many a mile so long as I have not to sacrifice my principle.

M. Paul Richard's presentation of my views about non-violence is really a caricature. I have no doubt that he understands me in the manner in which he has represented me. There is undoubtedly a sense in which the statement is true when I say that I hold my religion dearer than my country and that therefore I am a Hindu first and nationalist after. I do not become on that score a less nationalist than the best of them. I simply thereby imply that the interests of my country are identical with those of my religion. Similarly when I say that I prize my own salvation above everything else, above the salvation of India, it does not mean that my personal salvation requires a sacrifice of India's political or any other salvation. But it implies necessarily that the two go together. Just in the same sense I would decline to gain India's freedom at the cost of non-violence, meaning that India will never gain her freedom without non-violence or through violence. That I may be hopelessly wrong in holding the view is another matter, but such is my view and it is daily growing on me. I have so often remarked that whatever may be true of other countries, India's salvation lies only through the path of non-violence. If M. Paul Richard had understood me correctly he would have pacified his interviewer by saying that I believed that India could gain her liberty quickly only through non-violence and that therefore so long as the country accepted my guidance the country would have to be satisfied with my limitations and therefore permit me to guide her so long as the country believed that, as it is circumstanced, it had no means open to her for gaining her end except by non-violence and truth. M. Paul Richard has made the position worse by remarking that if India's freedom depends upon non-violence it will never be attained. It passes comprehension how he could have omitted to take notice of the phenomenal progress made by the country in the direction of freedom. Indeed, I claim that India is substantially free to-day, she has found the way, she is asserting herself, she has thousands of her children—men and women—who have learnt the sovereign virtue

of sacrifice without retaliation, and it is my certain conviction that if only workers will work out the constructive programme placed before them with industry and honesty, I have not a shadow of a doubt that we shall gain all the three ends in no time. I do not for one moment believe that the Congress workers cannot control forces of holiganism that exist in the country. Only we have not tried wholeheartedly to gain that control.

Dr. Kichlew and Col. Wedgwood

Dr. Kichlew writes from Karachi prison under date 23rd January 1922 describing himself as Prisoner NO 776:—

"I am sending you herewith a copy of a letter from Col. Wedgwood which has been forwarded to me by the Private Secretary to the Viceroy through the Superintendent, Karachi Jail. The letter speaks for itself and in my opinion is of sufficient interest to be sent on to you for whatever treatment you think best.

"As for myself I am quite happy where I am. Last time during the Rowlatt Act agitation in 1919 I was treated as a *political* prisoner although sentenced for life on more serious charges than this one under section 505 I. P. O. I was allowed to have newspapers, my own clothes, bedding, books and various other things of personal use, and there were also special arrangements made for food, bath, lights and other necessities of life. But this time it appears to me that in the opinion of the Bombay Government my offence is not of a political nature and I am therefore entitled to no such considerations as were thought fit and proper by the Punjab Government. My fellow "Conspirators" are of course treated like me more or less as ordinary criminals with this difference only that we are not allowed to mix with each other and are particularly kept aloof from other prisoners in jail. But we have made up our minds not to obey any orders which are likely to interfere in the performance of religious duties such as prayers, fastings etc., or which we consider to be morally degrading or humiliating.

"So you see, Babu, it is jail-life with a vengeance and I can assure you we are enjoying it to our hearts' content. Both the Ali Brothers are behaving like thorough sportsmen and I am proud of their friendship. Maulana Nisar Ahmad and Pir Gulam Mujaddid, too, are acquitting themselves in a splendid manner. I can't see Maulana Nisar Ahmad for he is living near Shaukat in some (to me unknown) part of the jail. But I daily meet Pir Sahib during daytime for we both work together on our *Charkhas*. Now please don't smile; spinning is good for our health and its music keeps the mind occupied. Maulana Husain Ahmad, probably you know, is on the banks of the Sabarmati somewhere near your Ashram.

"As for myself you will be glad to learn that (while others are unfortunately losing), I am gaining weight and I am fairly on the way to beat the jail record. I came with failing health, weighing 122 pounds only, but now my weight is something like 136 pounds. So I have a right to call myself hale and hearty. In fact I had gone up to 137 pounds, but two attacks of malarial fever and of course my old complaint of bleeding piles pulled me down again. Imprisonment for me has proved a God-send and a blessing in disguise, and the jail has given me a rest-cure which I could not get even on the heights of Simla. Life here is religiously simple—almost natural, and I sincerely hope that with absolute peace of conscience and mind, I shall be able to regain all my lost

weight which certainly was more than 140 pounds before the Rowlatt Act agitation.

"This is all I am allowed to tell you about jail life. The rest you can imagine. But we are jolly and happy over it all—this is all that is wanted.

"As for the Round Table Conference, though we are lovers of peace and would like to have an honourable settlement of the *three great questions*, I am afraid, in my opinion, is a little too early. On the one hand the people have not received sufficient training in suffering and on the other the Government has not yet fully realised that the voice of Gandhi is the voice of India and that every Indian worth his salt is a nationalist at heart and is ready to sacrifice his all for the sake of *Liberty*. But if the Conference does come off at all you can sit with perfect ease of mind for all absentees and whatever you do, I hope, you won't take into consideration the sufferings of the people in jail."

The following is Col. Wedgwood's letter referred to by Dr. Kichlew:—

"I do hope that they are treating you decently in jail. All that can be done to that end from this country has been done, for you are rarely out of our thoughts. If you see Amirohand of Peshawar, tell him also that our sympathy (for what it is worth) and our best wishes go to him in this trial. One feels helpless here, but I expect that you all are treading serene the path you have laid out to follow and want nothing but just that for which you have lived.

"Of course I am sorry that it has come to this, but it is no use crying over spilt milk and we have just got to try to get things put right as soon as possible. Before you can get to the Round Table Conference you must go through the door of the Jail.

"The Irish settlement has, I think, made all things easier. The Irish Free State must stand up for their companion in a similar struggle. Their wishes will count for something now, and there are few more popular persons in England to-day than Michael Collins with his jokes and his Irish brogue. It has made all our Tories suddenly wake to the virtue and to the future grandeur of a Commonwealth of Free Peoples. They have caught the habit; having tried it on Ireland and secured unanimous applause, they will be trying it on India next.

"It is they who will have to try it, for I see no chance of Labour ever coming into power in my life-time, though they have put me on the front bench to make a better fight of it. If an election comes this year, Lloyd George will be almost as strong as ever.

"Meanwhile, though it comes less home to you, I see all the old civilisations dying. The German Mark has followed the Crown and the Rouble into worthlessness. Next year, I fancy the French and the Italian currency will follow suit. They are living on the printing press and dare not return to sound finance and heavy taxation. As a result the towns die out, manufactures cease and the proletariat drift into the country to beg for work and land on which to live a natural life. Economics are bringing Gandhi-ism upon Europe, and those who have the lands will give none up to those who need it.

"To us this is more important than to India, for we have nearly a quarter of our workers out of work with no sign of recovery.

"Take care of yourself, and, if you can, write to me and tell me your news.

Yours very sincerely,
Josiah. C. Wedgwood."

Our Laxity

By M. K. GANDHI

A reliable correspondent writes to me saying that in Allahabad and Benares the volunteers have been enlisted without regard to their qualifications. Hardly 50 could be found dressed in handspan *khaddar* from top to toe. Some more could be found wearing *khaddar* for outer covering, all the rest being foreign cloth. The same correspondent says that some of the volunteers do not mind an occasional drink and that they are not tested as to their belief in non-violence and that in many instances the local Congress officials have lost control over them. It has been officially reported that there are 96,000 volunteers enlisted in the United Provinces. If it is a fact that there are so many volunteers on the roll and that the vast majority of them do not conform to the Congress conditions, they are worse than useless. The complaints mentioned by me are formidable, yet as a matter of fact, I have not exhausted them all. The same news comes from Calcutta, again from a reliable source. My informant tells me that hundreds who have gone to jail know nothing about the pledge, are not dressed in *khaddar*, are not dressed even in Indian mill cloth but have gone to jail wearing foreign cloth, and that they have had no training in non-violence. A correspondent from Rohilkhand writes bitterly complaining that in many parts of that district the volunteers do not obey instructions and make the position of Congress officials most difficult and embarrassing.

If one-tenth of these complaints is true I fear that we have not been able to cope with the wonderful awakening and to bring under control all the new additions to the Congress organisation. It is possible that it is nobody's fault that this is so. The Government precipitated a crisis by hurling the notifications about public meetings and volunteers at us. The challenge had to be and was taken up. New and inexperienced men found themselves clothed with office and they were called upon to deal with a crisis which would have taxed to its utmost the capacity even of the experienced leaders withdrawn from public guidance.

There is much to be said in favour of this argument. No one need therefore be blamed, but we must not blink the facts. On the contrary we must face them sternly, boldly and set our own house in order. No army in the world has yet marched to victory, which has not consisted of soldiers possessing the qualities expected of them. An army of peace has greater need to exhibit the qualities laid down for its soldiers. It would not do to retort that the standard is too high. A recruiting officer who takes recruits below the standard renders himself guilty of dishonesty, if he takes such recruits knowingly. All he can do is to report to the head-quarters that he cannot get recruits on the conditions prescribed, but on no account will he be justified in departing from them.

The conditions laid down by the Congress were read by myself in detail to the whole audience last December in the Congress pandal. They were exhaustively discussed by the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee and then they were explained by me to the delegates and visitors from the different provinces at numerous informal discussions. The plea of impossibility of fulfilment cannot therefore be accepted. The delegates knew what they were about. They were nearly 6,000. They came to represent their respective constituencies and there should have been no difficulty about the fulfilment of the conditions.

I should personally be satisfied with 500 volunteers thoroughly understanding and complying with the conditions, but I should not care to lead a struggle with 80,000 volunteers who know nothing of and care less about the

conditions. The reason is obvious. In the one case I have at least 300 stalwarts to support me, in the other case I have to carry a burden of 80,000 men, not volunteers, who are a drag upon me. The 300 would help me, would obey instructions, but 80,000 will certainly not carry out instructions and may throttle me. We must therefore once for all make up our minds that all the resolutions which are passed by the Congress Working Committee have to be fulfilled literally. They are part of a swift and practical programme upon whose due fulfilment rests the future of India, the redress of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and the attainment of Swaraj. Resolutions by themselves mean nothing if they are not to be carried out in full. We used to complain when our resolutions which were in days gone by addressed to the Government were not carried out by it. Who is to complain when the resolutions voluntarily and deliberately passed by us are not carried out by ourselves? I, therefore, strongly advise all Congress and Khilafat organisations to see that they are strictly enforced in their respective jurisdictions. If they do not, it is they who will endanger the movement and no one else. It is for us to make or mar the future.

Prisoners in Delhi Jail

To,

The Editor, "Young India", Ahmedabad.

Sir,—The Chief Commissioner of Delhi has attempted in the Press Communique dated 19th January 1922, with a view "to convincing the intelligent reader", to disprove the statements apropos treatment of non-cooperator prisoners in the Delhi Jail. The cumulative weight of his argument almost induces a non-cooperator to regard the Delhi Jail as a not unpleasant change from the hard life he has to lead. The pity, however, is that there is none so blind as to fall into the ditch.

I am sending you a painful letter signed by Messrs. Shankerlal L. Hanvant Sahai and Sardar Nanak Singh painting the Delhi jail-life in all its blood-red colours. "Volunteers were confined in open barracks and left shivering in the cold winter nights. We asked in vain for sufficient clothes and bedding. Many fell victims to bronchial troubles." This is moreover borne out by the independent testimony of a highly responsible Congress official and an esteemed citizen of Delhi who visited Dr. Abdul Rehman in jail. "For several days" says he "Dr. Abdul Rehman was feverish with pains in the chest and was dosed with quinine without any medical examination. His condition grew worse and for several consecutive nights he suffered acute pains. Only then the Superintendent of Jail and a day after the Civil Surgeon, examined him and removed him to Hospital." Nevertheless the *communique* states that "no sickness specially traceable to this cause (insufficient clothing) was observable amongst the prisoners." Such is the callousness of the Government and its eulogized "highly qualified health officer."

Furthermore, the *communique* has taken objection to L. Shanker Lal's description of Jail diet as "canine food". I am enclosing a prisoner's letter wherein he explicitly states that the food is "bovine and equestrian". Additional unimpeachable evidence is furnished by the following statement of a distinguished and prominent visitor to the Jail: "The food shown me consisted of 'Mash Dhal' and bread. The former was cooked in an iron bowl and had become black with dissolved iron. The bread was so hard that it required a fair amount of strength to break it." Mr. Shanker Lal on the 12th and 13th December, several political prisoners on the 17th and 18th, and a hundred volunteers together with Messrs Asaf Ali, Mohammad Taqi and even Dr. Abdul Rehman notwithstanding his illness on the 30th and 31st of December, were on a hunger strike preferring

starvation to the "full diet" of the Delhi Jail. Mr. Asaf Ali states, "The conditions in the Delhi Jail were growing from bad to worse. We raised an indignant protest for which the thoughtful and sensible amongst us, who could have influenced the volunteers, were removed to Mianwali. The rest were forcibly separated and confined and it was only after a two days' fast, during which for about 28 hours we could not even go for natural purposes, that our condition somewhat ameliorated." Samples of this jail food were brought to me in a tiffin carrier. The bread was a mixture of pebbles, sand, stone-dust and wheat. The vegetables were coarse cabbage and cauliflower leaves. And that was all the menu. I dare not ask in the deep pathetic words of the prophet of old "Who is there amongst you who, if his son ask bread, shall give him stones?" For I have not the heart to answer "the Superintendent of the Delhi Jail."

Apropos the tactics of securing an apology from civil resisters, I am giving a *verbatim litteratim* translation of a letter of Maulana Abdulah, late Secretary Provincial Khilafat Committee, to the Editors of *Congress*, an Urdu daily, and published in the issue of 3rd January 1922. "The treatment meted out to us in Delhi was unbearable. It is a long story but one fact deserves attention. Calculated attempts are being made to ill-treat prisoners. The Jail staff has been let loose to coerce prisoners into tendering an apology. We tried to prevent this and orders have been issued against me and nine others for our removal to Mianwali." This is corroborated by a letter received from the Delhi Jail and written on Jail paper which I am enclosing herewith. For obvious reasons I have suppressed the writer's name. "The gaoler came to our cell this morning saying that our imprisonment had been reduced to half its term and asking us to sign a paper of apology. We refused and said 'We do not recognise your Government'."

I come next to flogging. Mahatma Gandhi has forestalled me by pointing out that my reference was not to flogging in the Delhi Jail.

Then as to blankets. "You will be shocked" says Maulana Abdulah in the above-mentioned letter "at the way these poor non-co-operators—about 115—are being treated. They have been given blood-laden blankets belonging to the hospital patients. I say, by my faith, that these helpless volunteers have no choice but to say their prayers on these self-same blankets." I have Mr. Shanker Lal's statement supported by Messrs. Pt. Shadi Ram and Bhagwan Swarup Basal and forty others as ear-witnesses, given on the morning of 26th December 1921 when he was being removed to Mianwali, that the stink in the blood-stained blankets was so offensive that he was "nigh losing his reason." Letters from prisoners in the jail tell the same tale. I have referred to the blankets issued to Mr. Shanker Lal and others as being blood-stained. The Delhi *communiqué* describes them as rust-stained. There is a world of difference between blood and rust. And the non-co-operator prisoners in the Delhi Jail know the significance of this terrible difference more vividly than I or the chemical analyst to the Government of Delhi. Is it blood or rust? I almost hear the Delhi Government answer "Blood and Iron."

Hadi Hasan

Secy, Dist. Con. Committee, Delhi.

[With the exception of one irrelevant paragraph I am giving the letter as received without even removing the picturesque though inoffensive adjectives. It must be clear to any impartial observer that a mere denial by interested parties, however highly placed they may be, will not be enough to remove the bad taste in the mouth left by these revelations.

M. K.

Government Denials

1. On behalf of the Bihar Government

The Bihar Publicity Officer sends me the following for publication in reply to my statement in my rejoinder to the Government of India's reply to my manifesto addressed to H. E. The Viceroy:—

"In the manifesto dated the 7th February issued by Mr. Gandhi from Bardoli, mention is made of certain acts of "lawless repression" by the Government, which in his opinion justify resort to civil disobedience. Among these instances is the following item:—'looting, admitted by the Bihar Government, of villages by an officer and big company without any permission from any one.' The reference is evidently to the Dhanaha Thana incident, and the plain implication of this statement is that the looting was carried out under the orders of the officer in charge of the police company and that this fact is admitted by the Bihar Government. The substance of the statement made by the Chief Secretary in the Legislative Council to which Mr. Gandhi evidently refers is as follows:—

"On the 27 December, 1921, on receipt of information from Mr. Mackinnon, Manager of the Baikunthpur Factory, that certain villages were in a very disturbed state, the military mounted police marched through Piprahia, Bairatwa, Chanderpore and Sihulia. The allegations of looting in village Piprahia appeared on the finding of the District Magistrate to be entirely without foundation. Some looting, however, did take place in the other three villages. The District Magistrate was of opinion that the looting which occurred was in no way systematic but sporadic, a few *sowars* slipping down side lanes and taking articles from owners. The Inspector in charge knew nothing about it till the villagers of Sihulia came up and complained, when the property was, under the orders of the Inspector, restored on the spot. The Inspector General of Police had been requested to take disciplinary action against those *sowars* against whom there was definite evidence of having taken part in looting, and the Sub Divisional Officer, Bettiah, is to take cognizance of any offences that may be disclosed during the enquiry."

"The statement made by Government makes it clear that the published reports of the looting were much exaggerated and that such looting as took place was the act of individual *sowars*. It also shows that Government will not countenance any breach of discipline like that of which the *sowars* were guilty on this occasion.

"Mr. Gandhi's manifesto certainly tries to put a very different complexion on the whole affair."

I gladly publish the note, but I must confess that it carries no conviction to me. The substance of the statement of the Chief Secretary is not half as damning as the original which I have read and which appears in the *Searchlight* (27-1-22). The cross fire to which the Chief Secretary was exposed in the Bihar Council is a study in hedging and fencing. The Chief Secretary is unable to deny that the officer himself did not take part in looting. These villages of Champaran I know very well. They have no winding lanes. Looting does not cease to be looting when the looted property is restored. The admissions wrung from the Chief Secretary by the Councillors leave on the reader's mind the impression that there is more behind the admissions than appears on the surface. Let me add, too, that the officer and the *sowars* went in spite of prohibition against the mounted police parading without any Magistrate accompanying them. No explanation is still forthcoming as to why the officer rode out with his *sowars* and what action has been taken against him for the breach of discipline which the Government have been compelled to admit, yet it be noted too that the villagers had

nothing to deserve the looting expedition. As the summary admits "on receipt of information from Mr. Mackinnon, Manager of the Baikunthpur Factory, that certain villages were in a very disturbed state, the military mounted police marched through Pipariah, etc." I know what these marches mean to the villagers of Champaran. I am most anxious to be convinced that officialism has not reached the state of degradation which popular reports describe and which the Government are reluctantly obliged to admit in part or in full. But all my effort in that direction, I regret, has proved fruitless.

M. K. G.

2. Government Denies Bulandshahr Outrage

To, The Editor, *Young India*.

Dear Sir,—The attention of the United Provinces Government has been drawn to various accounts of action taken by the police in enforcing the Criminal Law Amendment Act against volunteers which have appeared from time to time in your paper. Efforts are being made to collect authentic details to correct or explain what your correspondents have written. In general their letters are tinged with much exaggeration. The amount of force which is necessarily required to deal with large mobs of people in an excited and recalcitrant mood are exaggerated into acts of deliberate assault. The other side of the picture, namely, open defiance of authority backed by legal warrants and the provocative attitude generally of dangerous assemblies headed by volunteers is completely ignored. Enquiry has been made into an account given by you in *Young India*, dated the 12th January 1922, of what took place between the 22nd and 25th December last. I would point out generally that this article itself shows how the volunteers set about deliberately to defy the law and how large mobs led by volunteers, which according to your correspondent numbered several thousands, paraded the town. These demonstrations are of the same character as have led to the recent lamentable occurrences in Bareilly and Gorakhpur and it is only just to Bulandshahr authorities to point to the fact that no such serious results occurred there. Your correspondent particularly draws attention to the fact that Bugrassi volunteers were "sturdy Pathans", a distinctly turbulent element. I pass now to various details. One Shiva Lal is mentioned as having been mercilessly beaten and left in an unconscious state: the actual facts are that he jumped down some temple steps to join the mob, in doing so he fell and hurt his head. He received strokes with canes from constables in the execution of their duty. There is no evidence to show that he was left in an unconscious state, he made no complaint to a Magistrate, nor did he go to a hospital. The three persons, Babu Shambhu Nath, Amar Singh and Said Ali were at the head of a large mob which completely overwhelmed the Sub-Divisional Officer. The position being dangerous and analogous to that of which we have had a recent example in Bareilly, the Sub-Divisional officer was obliged to summon the assistance of a small party of British soldiers to the support of the armed police. This sufficed to dissipate the mob without more than the ordinary display of force. The three above mentioned leaders of the mob were then arrested. Sham Nath and Said Ali were not brought to trial as they apologized and gave an undertaking to refrain from agitation in the future. Athar Singh, the fourth whom you mention, was one of a party of Vakils and others who advanced a few paces ahead of another portion of the mob. They all formed part of the unlawful assembly and declined to assist the Sub-Divisional Officer in dispersing the mob. Athar Singh was arrested as he refused

compliance with the orders and documentary evidence was found on his person showing him to be interested in the volunteer movement. Considering the disturbed condition of the town at the time, the arrested persons were very properly handcuffed during their removal to the Kotwali. The statement that on the 5th December volunteers were given from 25 to 50 cuts with batons, canes and lathis is absolutely untrue. In order to disperse the "sturdy Pathans" the Sub-Divisional Officer called out individuals and told each to proceed in a different direction. These men, it may be mentioned, had come from a distance of 25 miles by motor lorry especially to commit a breach of the law. A few complied with the orders and were only pushed. The fourth man did not comply and received three or four strokes only till he ran. The remainder were dispersed in a body by the ordinary force necessary and no person received more than a couple of strokes. None of them fainted as your correspondent states. The "prominent physician" appears to be a young shop-keeper. He wished to follow the mob and persisted when the Sub-Divisional Officer forbade him. He received a few strokes with a baton. He did not become senseless, which is apparently what your correspondent means by the expression "gone mad". He was seen by the Sub-Divisional Officer in the bazaar the following day. It was necessary to take measures to ensure that the roofs and other prominent places in the thoroughfares were not occupied by the public unnecessarily in the interests of their own safety and that of the rest of the public. This accounts for the alleged interference with individual liberty.

The raid on the Congress Committee Office was carried out while the mob was being dispersed. The Bugrassi volunteers—"the sturdy Pathans"—had taken refuge there. Here again the proceedings were similar to those of the Bareilly mob which occupied the Town Hall. There was absolutely no threat to open fire. The volunteers were given five minutes to leave the place and they took away themselves their own bedding. Lastly the statement that forms of law have not been complied with in reference to the imposition of fines is absolutely untrue. The property of the convicted persons was attached on proper warrants for levy of fines imposed.

May I request that you will give as much publicity to this account of what took place, for which the District Magistrate is responsible, as you gave to the uncorroborated and undoubtedly much exaggerated account written by your correspondent? I am similarly collecting information with regard to other published accounts which from time to time I shall send you.

Yours faithfully,

Lucknow,

18th Feb. '22.

J. E. Gondge

Publicity Commissioner.

[The foregoing version of the happenings at Bulandshahr between the dates 22nd and 25th December (and reported by us in the article 'What Next?' in the issue of *Young India* of January 12) carries us no further. A mere denial on behalf of the Government is no evidence of innocence. The Government officials are accused of lawless acts. If they are not guilty they must prove their innocence before an impartial commission. Till then, we are afraid, our correspondent's version must stand.

But what is still more objectionable in the letter of the Publicity Commissioner is that events that took place in December last are tried to be explained and justified by events that happened in February! This inversion of cause and sequence is misleading. For, after all Chauri Chaura is

nothing but a reaction against the very serious provocations that the Government have been giving to the people for the last two months in U. P. In this week's 'In Cold Blood', the reader will find diaries of incidents arranged in consecutive order in two districts of that unhappy province which will give him some idea as to what points of exasperation the people were gradually driven to. While, therefore, greatly deploring and denouncing the Chauri Chaura incident we should recognise also that if our information is correct it succeeded an unnecessary and uncalled for assault on three volunteers which absolutely destroyed all reason of the crowd.

In the light of the incident at Chauri Chaura, the Publicity Commissioner tries to justify the Bulandshahr incident thus:—"I would point out generally that this article (in *Young India*) itself shows how the volunteers set about deliberately to defy the law and how large mobs led by volunteers which according to your correspondent numbered several thousands paraded the town." This is nothing but a caricature of our report embodying wholesale travesty of facts. For, there was no mob at the beginning as even the most cursory reading of the report will show. This is what the report says:—"On the 23rd when some of the volunteers were returning from duty, they were caught up on the way by the police and mercilessly beaten with batons, canes, *lathis* and even shoes. But this did not demoralise the volunteers. They were again out on the 24th. When they reached the Chowk Bazaar they met the civil and armed police under the command of a Sub-Inspector who was accompanied by other Sub-Inspectors. On account of the previous day's happenings the public had crowded in very large numbers to see what was going to be done by the police who appeared to have come with a determined policy. As anticipated, the police at once began to belabour the public and the volunteers with thick canes, *lathis* and batons quite indiscriminately and very severely."

The Publicity Commissioner tries also to make capital out of an expression used by us in describing the Bngassi volunteers as 'sturdy Pathans.' But what did these 'sturdy Pathans' do? Is there any better proof of the wide acceptance of the doctrine of non-violence than their exemplary conduct in the face of a murderous attack on them, both individually and collectively? "There was no public" as the report says, "with these volunteers, as the latter had warned them on account of the anticipated action of the Police. The S. D. M. first called a few volunteers one by one. They were individually and consecutively belaboured by the S. D. M. and many a constable all at a time. Some of them received 25 to 50 cuts of batons, canes and *lathis*. They suffered all that without the least murmur or complaint. They then fell on the ground and fainted. The constables were then ordered to carry them one by one in different directions. The rest of the volunteers were all standing in a dignified mood to await their share of sacrifice. They were then attacked all in a body by the entire police force and were most cruelly belaboured. Many of them had no strength left to cover even a few paces of distance and were consequently found lying on the ground in the streets close by."

These are charges that cannot be airily dismissed by denials of interested parties. Asstt. Editor.—Y. I.]

3. U. P. Government's Denial

To, The Editor, Young India, Ahmedabad.

Dear Sir,—In continuation of my letter No. 360/C, dated the 10th February 1922, I beg to draw your attention to the fact that the Commissioner of the Benares Division has published a denial of the facts alleged in the article entitled "Legalised Pillage" which appeared under your name on page 3 of your issue dated the January 5th and other references from time to time. I attach a copy of the *communiqué* and request that you will do the Government the justice of publishing it in an early issue.

I am arranging to send you an answer to the telegram which you published about the Benares jail and treatment of prisoners later on.

Yours faithfully,

Lucknow,
14th Feb. 22.

J. E. Gondge
Publicity Commissioner

Press Communiqué

Inquiry has established that there is no truth whatever in the malicious statements made in the extinct "Independent" and other extremist papers, to the effect that volunteers arrested in Benares were subjected to obscene insults and threatened with indecent assaults by the police; nor is it a fact that any of the volunteers were stripped of all their clothes and sent home in the frosty cold of the night in a naked condition as alleged. The only foundation for this disgraceful libel is that in the case of a few volunteers who refused to give their addresses, some minor articles of clothing like hats and shoes were, by order of the trying Magistrate, distrained to pay their fines. Fines have been found most effective in deterring volunteers who had been intimidating shopkeepers and the general public, and their resentment has been expressed in much unjustified abuse of the police and magistracy.

[This denial practically denies nothing. For the *communiqué* admits that, "in the case of a few volunteers clothing like hats and shoes were by order of the trying Magistrate distrained to pay their fines." We do not know how the volunteers of Benares came to use 'hats'. The order of the trying Magistrate for distraintment, if it was passed at all, seems to have been passed behind the backs of the volunteers as they were not aware of any such order. The forcible attachment of things on their persons, therefore, can be very naturally and truthfully described as "pillage". As regards stripping of clothes the Benares correspondent of the *Leader* in his message dated December 31 says:—"The treatment of prisoners under orders of release is reprehensible. All clothes are snatched away. They are made to sit on the wet Kotwali grounds almost naked at midnight prior to their release." Again, in the *Aj* (Benares) of 27th *Poush* it is stated that the batch of volunteers who were fined Rs 10 on the 26th December last were removed to the Kotwali at 3 P. M., where everything on them except *dhotis* and *kurtas* were taken away. The gold ring of a volunteer was removed from his finger by calling in the aid of a goldsmith as he had a boil on that finger. They were then locked up in a damp dirty room, the floor of which was specially made wet by pouring water on it! And all this in the last week of December in Benares where the cold is so severe. They were then one by one discharged at dead of night. The process continued till midnight. We do not find, therefore, any exaggeration in the report which was quoted in the article "Legalised Pillage" referred to above by the Publicity Commissioner, which runs as follows:—"During the last three days the volunteers did not parade the streets to court arrest. Altogether nearly 500 were arrested, most of them were released after 24 hours or fined Rs. 10. In default, the Police stripped them of their blankets, coats, shoes watches etc."

As regards the charges of "obscene insults" and "indecent assaults" by the Police, the mere statement of the *Communiqué* that they are "malicious" does not prove that they did not occur.

One other point: The *Communiqué* says—"Fines have been found most effective in deterring volunteers." Does it admit by this the very serious charges as reported by the *Leader* correspondent, that in realising those fines "ornaments were taken off women's bodies and that *Stridhan* was not respected; utensils of daily use were taken away without any enquiry as to whether the property belonged really to the accused or to anybody else"? Specific instances in corroboration of this and similar statements are to be found in the correspondence of the victims of such oppression published over their names in the columns of the *Aj* of Benares. Asstt. Editor.—Y. I.]

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